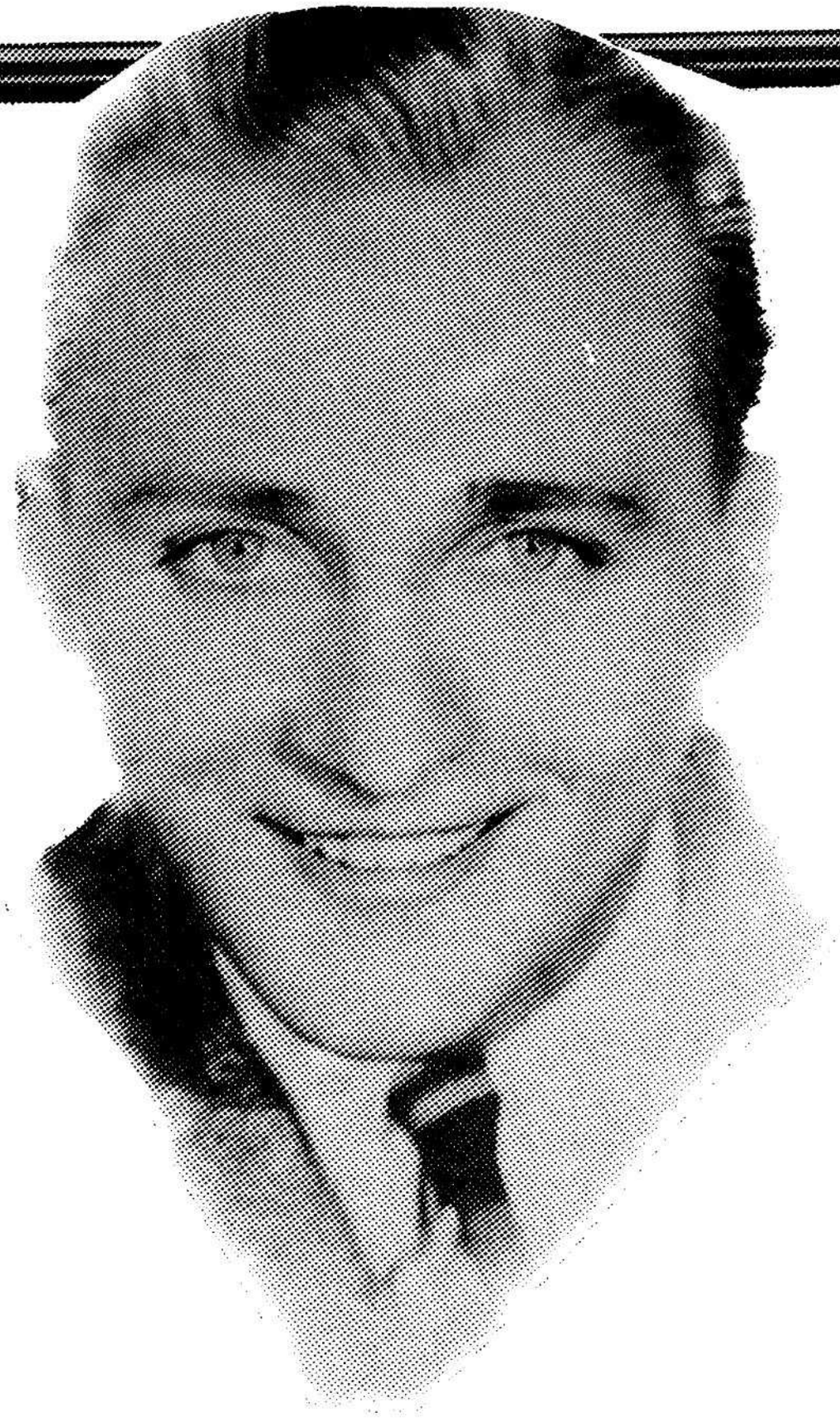
the CROSBY voice



NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY
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ISSUE No 25 SEPTEMBER 1983

Hello again,

Our third newsletter for the year is a few weeks later than we would have liked, but we hope that the content will make up for the lateness.

As you will no doubt remember, last issue featured Kathryn Crosby's book "My Life With Bing" which we understand is selling very well here. The Australian Womens' Weekly (a national magazine with one million + circulation - for those in other countries who may not have heard of it) sold the book via mail order and it was also available through the Channel 9 network around Australia who also promoted it very heavily. Kathryn herself appeared in an interview spread over five consecutive days on the national Mike Walsh show and in a special commercial prepared for channel 9.

That said, we now move on to this issue which makes a major feature of Gary Crosby's book "Going My Own Way". We begin on page 7 with the cover of the book and a review of same by yours truly whilst on pages 10 - 16 we reproduce a major article from American 'People' magazine on Gary and the book, entitled "The Sad Ballad of Bing and His Boys". On pages 21 and 22 we have an article which appeared in the Melbourne 'Herald' on April 9th which is happily pro-Bing, and finally, a transcript of a TV interview with Gary which is probably the most balanced of all the interviews given by Bing's oldest son. Our verdict on the book? It's not as bad as you've been lead to believe from all the publicity and in fact Gary, by his own admittance, comes across worse than Bing!

The above may sound that there's nothing else but Gary Crosby in this issue of the magazine. Far from it. On page 25, we begin a wonderful article by Vern Taylor entitled 'The Fabulous Ed Rice Tapes'. Who is Ed Rice and what tapes are we referring to? Turn to page 25 and

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The Victorian Bing Crosby Society, P.O. Box 422, South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3205.

Executive Committee: President: Bob Machliss Vice President: Ken Orren Treasurer: Keith Dorman Secretary: Les Saynor

General Committee: Bill Bennett, Josie Conway, Sylvia Harding, Jim McManus and George Styles.

U.S. Rep: Richard Pearson, PO Box 1481, Arlington, Virginia 22210.

read about a man whom every Crosby collector should take his cap off to. It's an excellent article too!

On page 48, there's a 1940's advertisment featuring Bing which as you'll see has special, although indirect, reference to the main feature of this issue. Thank you to the person (whose name I've misplaced) who sent this and a couple of other items to me.

This is probably a suitable time to thank all members who send clippings, articles, etc to us. We cannot have too many such items. BUT, please, if you have a newspaper or magazine article, send us the original not a photostat copy. We'll be happy to return the item to you if you ask for it to be sent back, but it is very difficult to get a clear copy suitable for reproduction from most stats. By the way, if you do want your material returned, you must state this when you send it, otherwise it will disappear into our big box of clippings forever.

Frank Murphy is back in the Photo Club business with colour pictures of Bing and you can read all about it on pages 45 and 46.

On pages 41 and 42 we feature an article on member Graham Pascoe who has the most understanding wife in the world. See why.

On page 40, you can see what five of your committee members look like as they put together this magazine.

Melbourne has a new shop specializing in Vintage Records, run by collector Peter Murphy. Read all about it on page 39.

There's also news of an earlier Crosby Club from 1945. Clem Parkinson found this article in a faded copy of 'The Southern Cross', a Melbourne suburban newspaper that is still going strong.

On the same page, is a reproduction of a first day cover from 1977 featuring Bing - one of a series honouring the 50th anniversary of talking pictures. The postmark shows that it was issued on Oct. 6th - just a few days before Bing died.

On page 33, we introduce you to another member - Les O'Donnell from Queensland.

In this issue, we also introduce a new feature 'Trading Post' in which you may advertise, free of charge, any records, books, etc that you wish to sell or exchange, or indeed want to get hold of.

There's a lot more too but you'll have to read on to find out what!

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FUTURE FUNCTIONS

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FINAL FUNCTIONS FOR 1983

OCTOBER 17TH - FILM EVENING: "DOUBLE OR NOTHING"

This movie was one of Bing's big hits from the late 30's and we're happy to be able to bring it to you on this night. Along with Bing are Martha Raye, Mary Carlisle, Andy Devine and Bill Frawley - all familiar faces to movie goers of the period. The songs are also well-known to Crosby admirers: "Smarty", "It's the Natural Thing to Do", "All you want to do is dance" and "The Moon Got in My Eyes".

As support, we will again try to screen a number of short films, originally scheduled for June 20th but substituted on that night by "Glorifying the American Girl" when they failed to arrive.

They are:

"Sex Life of a Polyp" - Robert Benchley
"Derby Decade" - Ruth Etting
"Wild Bill Hickup" - Spike Jones
"Boogie Woogie Dream - Lena Horne
"D.W. Griffith Interview" - Walter Huston
And a couple of mid-30's songs from Louis Armstrong.

Venue, as always, is the theatrette of the Mobil Building, 2 City Rd, South Melbourne. It's just behind the Melbourne Concert Hall and although the official starting time is 7.30, we do advise you to get there around 7.00 if possible, as parking is at a premium in the area since the Concert Hall opened.

Also, you'll have time to buy a raffle ticket for one of several prizes to be given out on the night and wade through the big box of discounted nostalgia records supplied by the Bentleigh Sewing and Record Centre.

We also hope to have copies of the new "Through the Years" LP available for all those members who ordered them - exact price will not be known until after we clear the discs through customs.

Entry for members is $2, member families $5, whilst pensioners and under-18's get in for $1. Non-members are $4 a head.

DECEMBER 5TH - FILM EVENING

More details on this night in the final edition of the Crosby Voice for 1983 - but we hope to screen "Here Come the Waves" from 1944.

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PAST FUNCTIONS

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JUNE 20TH - FILM EVENING "RHYTHM ON THE RIVER"

More than eighty members turned up on the night and were treated to a fine evening of Crosby. "Rhythm on the River" featured Mary Martin and Basil Rathbone in starring roles and gave us one of Bing's most lilting melodies (in the opinion of yours truly) of the period "Only Forever".

The same cannot be said of the last-minute substitution support feature of the evening "Glorifying the American Girl" from 1929. I suppose that 'dreadful' would be an apt summing up, even given that this was in the pioneering days of sound movies, but this is one early talkie that hasn't aged well.

The film was only saved by the appearance of three guest artists: Eddie Cantor, Helen Morgan and Rudy Vallee - who each performed special material that had nothing whatsoever to do with the story! These segments were originally presented in colour, but alas, we had to make do with black and white. Also of interest was the fact that the major musical numbers were directed by the one and only Ziegfeld, the only time that he ever contributed to a motion picture.

The door raffles were won by Les Saynor, Audrey Evans and Joe Stevens who each collected a self-inking 'Bing' stamp (donated by the Bing Crosby Historical Society). Major prizes of a Crosby cassette, Ken Barnes Book and Crosby LP, were won by Keith Carr, Bob Neate and Yvonne Wilson, respectively.

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AUGUST 15TH - JOINT MEETING WITH THE INTERNATIONAL AL JOLSON SOCIETY.

This function is in fact now our best-attended film evening yet with a huge crowd. When we reached 100 we stopped counting!

Whilst "Glorifying the American Girl" was a bad example of a 1929 movie, "Mammy" starring Al Jolson, was just the opposite. Certainly the story creaked along in places and the camera work was static, but the acting was watchable and the musical numbers, for the most, entertaining. Half a century later, Al Jolson's personality still shines through as fresh as ever. Assuming that you like Jolson of course. I do.

"Too Much Harmony" received it's second showing for the club and was as well-received as ever. Interesting to note that Bing, in his third feature movie, was still only a second lead - in this case to Jack Oakie. I guess that Paramount still hadn't quite worked out how to use him.

For this joint function, we decided to offer extra special prizes for the door raffle, with the top prize being a copy of the mammoth book "The Movie Musical" which lists and describes every musical made in Hollywood.

This prize went to Stan Alexander, whilst a copy of "The Films of Bing Crosby" went to Bill Miller of the Jolson Society, "The Movie Musical" to Bernard Mullins, "Al Jolson" by Michael Friedland to Wally Carson and a Crosby LP to Joe Pilkington.

We hope that you enjoy these raffles. It's just another way that we try to bring added value to members.

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THE BING BOOK OF VERSE

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Enterprising member Ted Paradissis has written and illustrated a most unusual book. Entitled "The Bing Book of Verse", it features 56 pages of original poetry written by Ted and is about to be published for sale through Melbourne bookstores. Cost will be about $5.50 Australian and the book will be available for sale at club meetings. Members wishing to buy direct from Ted may do so by writing to him at home. His address: 6 Stroma Avenue, North Balwyn, Victoria, Australia 3104.

To give you an example of what you can expect, on the following page we reproduce one of the poems; obviously a tribute to Bing's 1952 movie "Just For You".

MEMORY SCRAPS
Second

On long lawns tongues are trimming
As anxious parents wait.
Prim elm-tree leaves are skimming
into the brimming fete.

A motorboat put-putting
across a drowsy lake
to the bare stage abutting
brings showman Jordan Blake.

Daughter Barbara, dreaming,
has set her heart today
on joining the redeeming
College of Social Sway.

Some parents may look down on
entertainment riffraff,
waiting to slap a frown on
any unguarded gaffe,

but Jordan, calm and breezy,
has charmed the college Head:
enrolling should be easy,
unless we've been mislead.

What's this? He's been invited
to sing before the band.
Reluctant, not excited,
he'll feed them something bland.

He's up there now announcing
a leafy song called Trees,
while Barbara goes bouncing
to a front seat she sees.

To make a good impression
is Jordan's only thought
until a glad expression
of recognition sought

makes him spin round in wonder
to shake the maestro's hand.
He finds that there's no blunder:
the leader of the band:

Georgie Polansky, beams up
like a real sunshine friend.
In old days they would team up
their song and dance to blend.

'Why, Georgie! I'm portraying
-- I'm sure that you are too --
the time when we were playing
in dear Kalamazoo. '

'Oh, yes! We did perform then
in a warm minor key
a number called The Ten Ten
from Ten-Ten-Tennessee. '

'D'you think...?' Yes!' 'Then we'll
And so they both forget do it!'
themselves, and both soft-shoe it
while singing their duet.

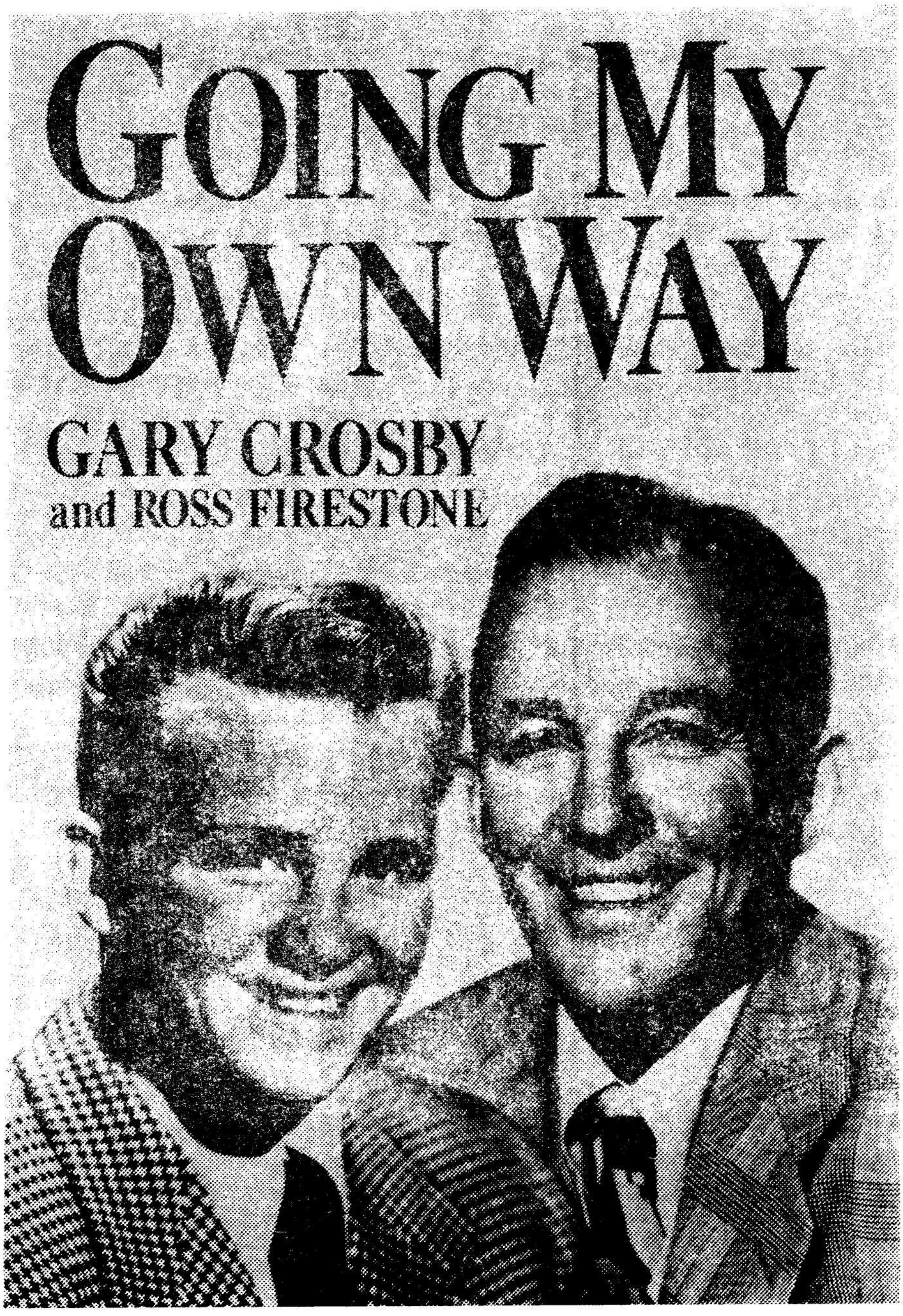
The college Head's delighted:
she leads the loud applause.
But Barbara feels slighted,
slips out during a pause

and later tells her father
of shame she shouldn't feel.
Really, she would much rather
their origins conceal.

For his act Jordan's sad now.
He's feeling most contrite.
The college Head, who's glad now,
assures them it's all right.

He offers to return and
intone a verse of Trees.
She quickly shows concern and
reveals it would not please:

'Your daughter we'll enrol, sir;
showmen are not taboo.
You may your girl console, sir.
We'll do it, just for you.'


GOING MY
OWN WAY
GARY CROSBY
and ROSS FIRESTONE

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GARY'S BOOK

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The media really had a field day with this one! Even better than "Bing Crosby - The Hollow Man", this book by Bing's own number one son had to be the truth about what Bing was really like in private.

And to an extent, it does reveal something of the other side of Bing and we'll get to that in a moment.

But let us begin by saying that as might have been expected, the newspapers and magazines have picked on and exploited a few of the more sensational 'revelations' of the book andgenerally ignored the rest. Fair enough. Good news doesn't sell nearly as many newspapers as bad news.

But what doesn't come out in many of the reviews is that Gary blames himself for much of what happened. It couldn't have been easy being the son of Bing Crosby in the 1940's and 50's but then Gary didn't make things easier for himself. He was an agressive kid, short tempered and with a knack for getting into trouble.

Certainly Bing comes across as a strict, authoritarian father - quite different from the character he portrayed on the screen or the radio. However, Gary says that away from the home environment, Bing actually became the character "Bing Crosby" in public life, but in home life, he was no different from many fathers of the period.
Bing had his rules and he expected them to be obeyed. If not, watch out!

Later, when Gary grew up, his relationship with dad improved, but his personal life deteriorated and a large part of the book describes his problems and how he overcame them.

One point that Gary does clear up is that when Dixie Lee Crosby was terminally ill, Bing went overseas to film "Little Boy Lost" only to prevent Dixie learning how seriously ill she was. In "The Hollow Man", the authors imply that this was because Bing simply didn't care about his wife; Gary tells us that the opposite was the case.

"Going My Own Way" will help fill in your image of Bing as a private individual. I'm afraid that anyone who believes still that Bing was Father O'Malley in private life is destined to have their illusions

finally shattered by this book, but it is worth reading if you want to learn something more about Bing than the official studio releases of earlier decades would have us believe.

Richard Pearson has sent me tapes of a number of interviews given by Gary on various programmes. It is interesting to hear how Gary's stand on the book and indeed Bing varies with each interviewer. If the questioner takes the stance that Bing was some sort of monster and child beater, then Gary's responses helps support this proposition. If however, the interview takes the opposite tack, that Bing perhaps wasn't all that bad, then Gary supports that approach also. From the interviews supplied by Richard, I have chosen the one that I feel presents the most balanced picture. I hope that you find it interesting. The show is unidentified.

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INTERVIEW WITH GARY CROSBY
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INTERVIEWER: Take a look at these pictures...pictures like these captured the growth of Bing Crosby's extraordinary career as well as the growth of a public image best described as 'the happy Crosby clan'. Now in a book called 'Going My Own Way' a very different Bing is revealed. One that caused 'People' magazine to question whether his behaviour made him 'Daddy Dearest'. What was life with Bing really like. Let's find out from the author of 'Going My Own Way', Gary Crosby.
(TO GARY) I know you didn't write it but the People magazine title 'Daddy Dearest'...?

GARY: Not at all...but sometimes I guess you have to live with what's not comfortable. The way it was explained to me was that by putting that sort of title onto it makes it very identifiable to people...they wouldn't know what they were going to read other wise.

I: So they equate it with the Joan Crawford book then.

G: If that's what they want to do, yes, although I don't find anything derogatory about the Christina Crawford thing. I thought it took a lot of guts for the girl to write that thing. I've read that book and I believe a lot of it.

I: In the book, you talk a lot about the public verses the private image. Publicly, he's a legend.

cont/...17

The Sad Ballad of Bing and His Boys

Cover

One thing I know: I'm going to keep yipping at these little scoundrels until they're 21, and I'm going to demand they have a goal in life, a purpose. The most tragic spectacle I can think of is that of a young man slipping aimlessly through school, then life, secure in the belief that affluence means happiness. I'm not going to let up on them.

—Bing Crosby, *Call Me Lucky*, 1953

I dropped my pants, pulled down my undershorts and bent over. Then he went at it with the belt dotted with metal studs he kept reserved for the occasion. Quite dispassionately, without the least display of emotion or loss of self-control, he whacked away until he drew the first drop of blood, and then he stopped. It normally took between twelve and fifteen strokes. I counted them off one by one and hoped I would bleed early. To keep my mind off the hurt, I would conjure up different schemes to get back at him, ways to murder him.

—Gary Crosby, *Going My Own Way*, 1983

When the word arrived from Spain, that day in October 1977, Gary Crosby was playing tennis at a Los Angeles club. "One of the ladies came to the back gate," he recalls. "I could see she was crying. She said, 'I'm sorry to be the one to tell you, but your father just passed away.' " Pausing for only that moment, Gary Crosby then continued his game. "I thought, 'Am I supposed to act like I loved him all my life?' " At the funeral, Gary looked down at the body and said, "Well, now you're in a place where you can understand it all."

When Bing Crosby, 73, died of a heart attack on a Madrid golf course, he was not only a renowned performer but one of the nation's most beloved father figures. During a career that spanned five decades, he was acclaimed by LIFE magazine as "incontestably the No. 1 Big Family Man of Hollywood." The National Father's Day Committee honored him as "Hollywood's Most Typical Father." To an admiring public, the portrayal of a wise, warm, Irish Catholic patriarch was Bing Crosby's longest-running, most convincing role. That his four sons became notorious for drinking and squabbling scarcely tainted Bing's image; instead, he became the object of public sympathy, the good father afflicted with unruly and sometimes ungrateful children.

That benign view has now been challenged by Gary Crosby, 49, eldest of the singer's four sons by first wife Dixie Lee Crosby. According to Gary, life with father was a hell of a life. In his just published memoir *Going My Own Way* (Doubleday, $15.95), Crosby recounts a Hollywood Gothic horror story that only Christina Crawford could envy. He describes a household populated by an icy, dictatorial father, an alcoholic, lonely mother and a quartet of boisterous, tormented boys. Says Gary, "It was a house of terror all the time."

Gary's look back in anger has provoked a high-powered fraternal feud. Says younger brother Phillip, 48, "Gary is a whining, bitching crybaby, walking around with a two-by-four on his shoulder and just daring people to nudge it off." Counters Gary, whose fists often clench at the mere mention of Phillip, "As far as I'm concerned, Phillip's dead. He isn't worth

Family portrait, 1940: from left, Phillip, 5, Gary, 6, Dixie, Lindsay, 2, Bing and Dennis, 5. The older boys entered military school very young

the powder to blow him to hell."

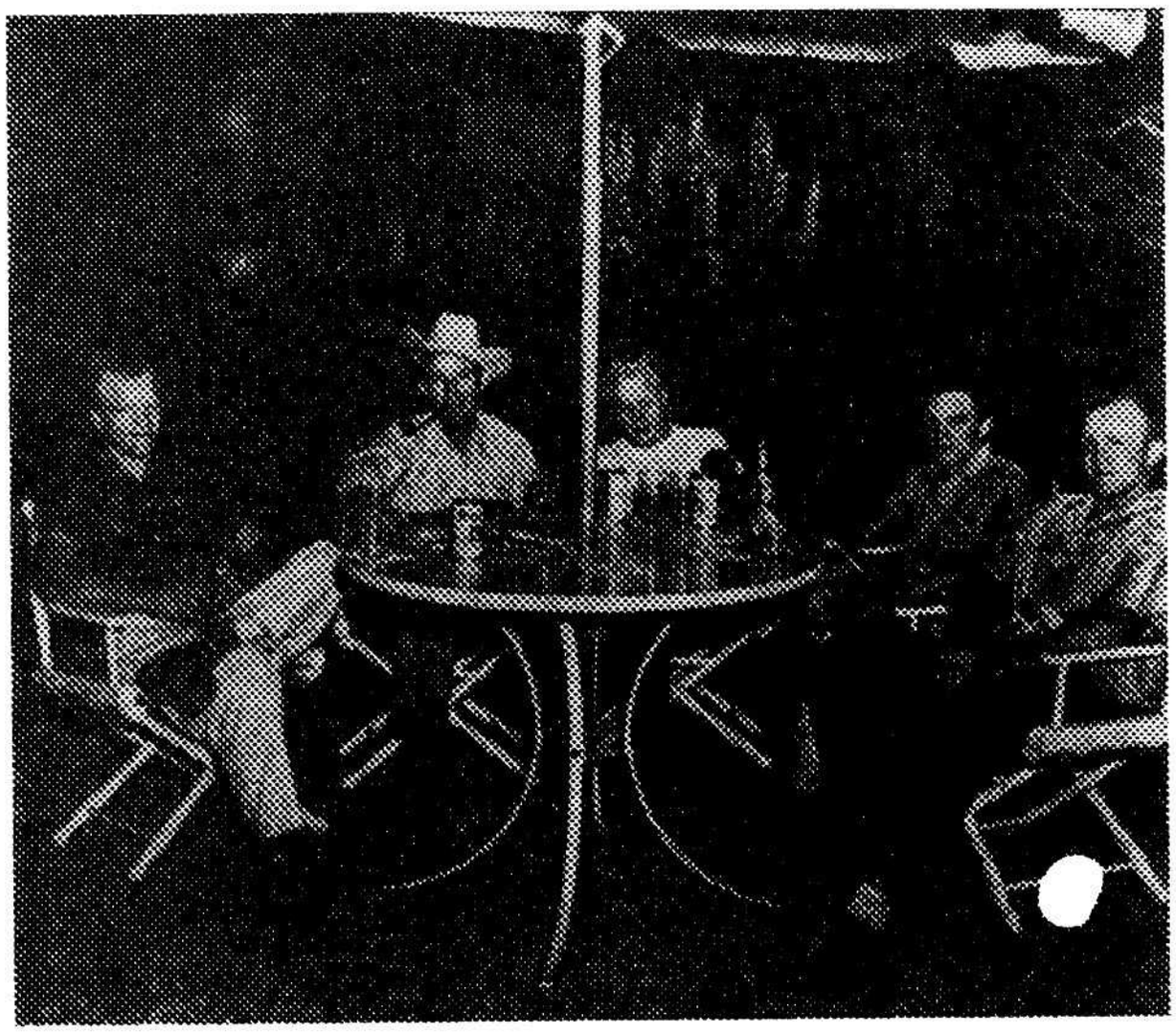
Phillip's twin, Dennis, professes little interest in the family history. He calls the book "Gary's business." While Dennis doesn't deny Gary's version, he explains, "Gary has a lot of anger." Baby brother Lindsay, 45, sides with Gary. "I'm glad he did it," says Lindsay. "I hope it clears up a lot of the old lies and rumors." Lindsay's endorsement is surprising. By most accounts, he was Bing's favorite of the four.

Gary's public declarations have aroused ot[illegible] relatives and friends. In defense of his brother Bing, bandleader Bob Crosby, 69, insists, "I never remember anyone being physically touched in any way." Adds Bing's best friend, bandleader Phil Harris, "I was

around the boys practically all the time, and I didn't see Bing beating them. I don't think a man can sing like he did and have as many people love him as he did and be too bad."

This week Bing's second wife, Kathryn, who is five months younger than her stepson Gary, has published *her* memoir. *My Life With Bing* is a rosy reminiscence of the entertainer with whom she had three children: Harry Lillis III, 24, a graduate business student at Fordham University; Mary Frances, 23, an actress most famous for shooting J.R. Ewing on *Dallas;* and Nathaniel, 21, a champion golfer and student at the University of Miami. Kathryn is Bing's most loyal fan. "You can't lie to a camera," she observed last year. "What comes out on film is what is within the actor."

Despite differing recollections about their father, the Crosby boys generally disagree with Kathryn. The public Bing was cool, easygoing and debonair; the private Bing was someone quite different. Says Lindsay pointedly, "Nobody knows better than us."



Bing courted a "family man" image (here in 1953). Wrote one reporter, "To Bing Crosby, his greatest achievement is his four sons."

The boys' mother, Dixie Lee (real name: Wilma Wyatt), was a promising 19-year-old actress-singer when she married Bing in 1930. Their first-born arrived three years later and was named after Bing's buddy Gary Cooper; then Dixie quickly gave birth to twins, and eight years into her marriage, Lindsay. In the early days, recalls Lindsay, "We were very tight." Gary characterizes the foursome as "red-blooded Irish kids who loved to hassle and play football and raise hell just as much as anybody."

But in the 20-room Crosby mansion in Los Angeles, harsh discipline was the order of the day. Bing and Dixie set rules that governed every waking hour, and violations of the rules resulted in humiliating punishments. When Phillip hid his bacon and eggs under a rug instead of eating everything on his breakfast plate, Dixie found the food and forced him to eat it, "dirt, hairs and all," writes Gary. Messiness was not tolerated. If one of the boys did not put away his underwear, he had to tie it on a string and wear it around his neck until bedtime. Bing referred to that as "the Crosby lavalier."

The most serious transgressions brought severe whippings, and as the most rebellious of the brothers, Gary was the one most frequently beaten. "He got the first licking, and we got the second," says Dennis. Gary began to expect punishment almost daily. "My father would come home at 6 o'clock, and by 6:05 he'd heard the news of what I'd done. Then I'd get bent over and my pants taken down and beat till I bled. He was never an enraged, insane man. He was very methodical."

In fact, the famous even-tempered Bing was infamous in his own household. "He never blew the old cool. It was like dealing with a frigging mop," says Gary. Adds Dennis, "He could get cold real quick." The slightest show of affection galvanized young Lindsay. "Dad would say, 'Goodnight, I love you,' and that to me was heaven."

Bing, who considered himself a regular guy, wanted his sons to distrust the glamorous life. In *Call Me Lucky,* he complained, "Raising the sons of a movie star presents special problems." Writes Gary in *Going My Own Way,* "The idea was to be ordinary." But, the son realized at an early age, "There were a few problems with being just an ordinary kid. For one thing, Dad didn't seem to be just an ordinary father." In fact, Bing consciously distanced himself from his children. Once he wrote, "When I want to be especially flattering to one of my offspring, I say, 'Nice going,' and let it go at that."

He credited his child-rearing methods to an Italian proverb: "Never kiss a baby unless he's asleep."

That reserve took its toll on Dixie too. Says Gary, "My mother was the kind of person who needed to hear, 'Sweetheart, darling, I love you,' and he just couldn't do it." According to Phillip, Dixie was "painfully shy" and often felt uncomfortable among her husband's set. She regularly declined Bing's invitations to accompany him to parties or movie locations. Observes Lindsay, "I think she got lonely because Dad was working all the time."

Instead, Dixie found a reliable companion in the bottle. "She was a wreck," says Gary. "I'd see her passed out in her room, in bed or on the floor of her dressing room. It scared the hell out of me." Bing and the boys' nurse tried to hide Dixie's condition from the kids. Gary recalls: "They'd say, 'She's taking a nap today.' And I'd say, 'All day?' " When Dixie was not drinking, she was to her sons what Bing was not: "warm and loving," as all the boys remember her. In 1952 her death from cancer at age 40 resulted in a rare moment of togetherness for the family.

If Dixie at times was compassionate, Bing could be cruel. He gave his sons belittling nicknames. Dennis was

"Ugly" and "Stupid." Lindsay was "The Head" (Bing considered the boy's head too big for his body). Because Phillip was frequently combing his hair, he was dubbed "Dude" and "Handsome." Gary did not get off so easily. "I had a big broad ass on me as a kid that used to annoy the hell out of my father." So his nicknames, which Bing did not hesitate to use in public, were "Satchel Ass" and "Bucket Butt."

Gary's weight problem, in fact, brought him special attention. Once a week Bing weighed the boy. If the numbers displeased him, Gary was ordered into the office for a whipping.

The battles between father and sons continued even after Gary, Phillip and Dennis were sent to a strict, Jesuit-run boarding school south of San Francisco. For Gary, the turning point came at age 17. Home for the Christmas holidays, he overheard his father's pals discussing Bing's sexual infidelity. That conversation shattered Gary's image of his father. "I started looking him dead in the eye for a change. Maybe I wasn't so bad. Maybe he wasn't so goddamn good either."

The beatings ended a few months later. Gary was now a 210-pound high school linebacker just shy of his 18th birthday. By this time Bing had replaced the belt with a cane. "He'd hold it with both hands like he was playing baseball," reports Gary. "He just stepped into me 13 times." On this occasion, however, Gary confronted his father. "I took the cane away and broke it over my knees. I cussed him and told him if he ever touched me again, I'd kill him." The explosion produced no discernible reaction from Bing. "I was a physical, emotional, mental wreck, and he was fine." The punishment stopped, but, says Gary, "He still won."

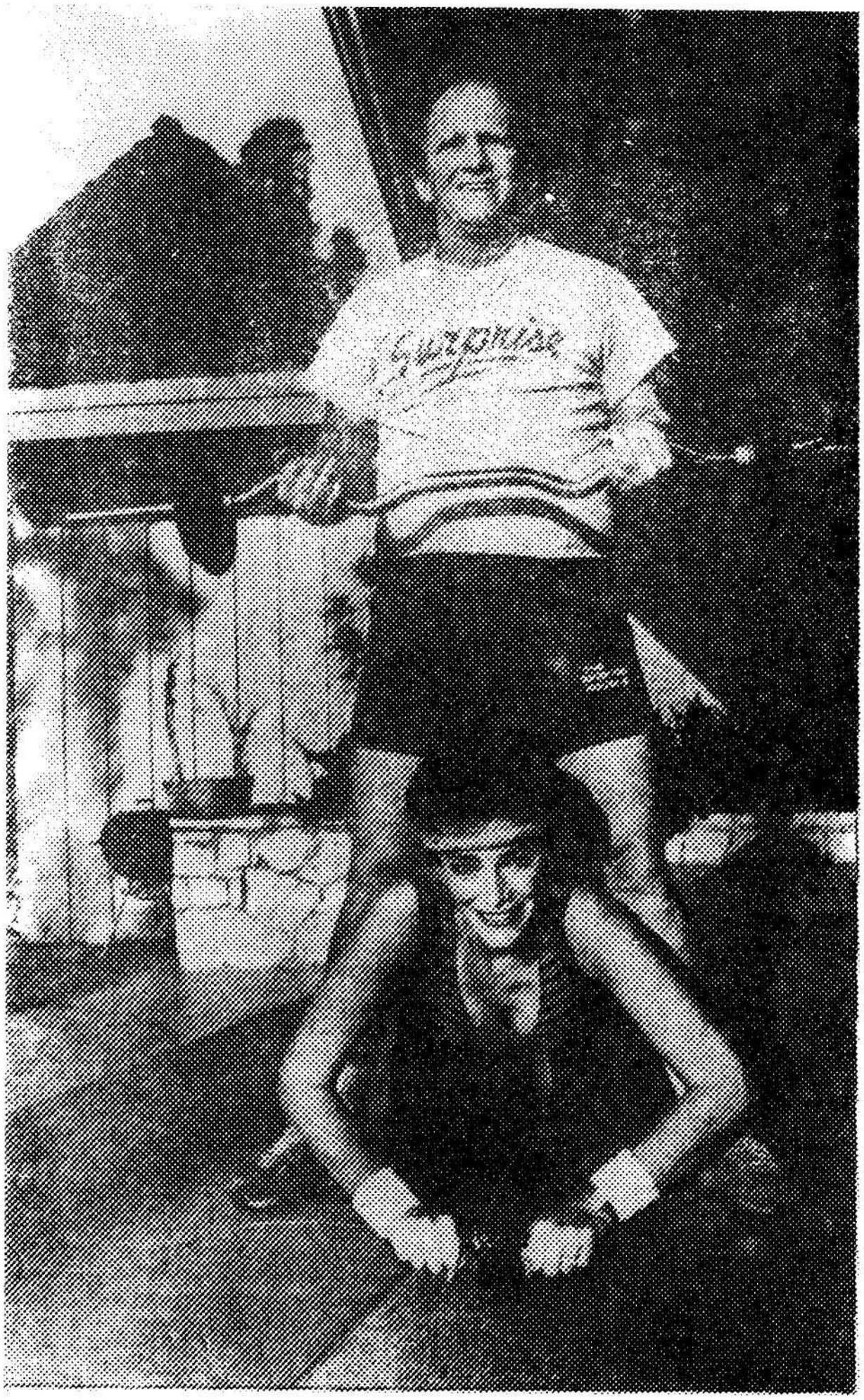
When a throat ailment forced Gary to cancel out of a 1980 television special featuring the Crosbys, Bing subbed for him in a dance number.

Even in adulthood, the sons could not escape Bing's influence. Gary started a solo singing career with the help of Bing's agent. Following Dad into show business, the sons found their acts unfavorably compared to his. Bing's attitude toward his sons continued to color their self-perceptions. Gary considered himself "a dumb stupid ass who wasn't going to amount to anything." Lindsay, when he married, found it difficult to express affection for his own family. "I think we've all got that problem," he says.

Today the sons still rely heavily on Bing and Dixie for their livelihoods. Says Phil Harris, "I love them all dearly, but I don't know a one of them who works." Each gets a substantial four-figure monthly check from a trust fund Dixie established; Bing's money was placed in a blind trust, which none of the sons can touch until age 65. It is a nice irony, says Phillip. "My father thought, 'How much trouble will they be able to get into then?' "

Although they all live in California, the brothers seldom visit. In fact, they have not seen each other much since their nightclub act, the Crosby Boys, broke up in 1959 after a dressing room brawl erupted among the four in Montreal. What they have shared over the years is a talent for trouble. Among them, the brothers have accumulated 11 wives, at least five drunken-driving arrests, two affiliations with Alcoholics Anonymous and a paternity suit.

Compared to his tempestuous past, Gary has a stable home life these days. He and his second wife, actress Andrea Claudio, 31, have a rented house in the San Fernando Valley. While awaiting job offers—a recent stint on *Simon & Simon* was his first assignment in almost two years—Gary attends five Alcoholics Anonymous meetings a week. Although he has not had liquor since he completed a treatment program (paid for by Bing) in 1961, Gary says, "I quit drinking but I've never stopped being an alcoholic."



"I ran from me all my life," says Gary (at home with wife Andrea Claudio, 31). He is now an active member of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Cover

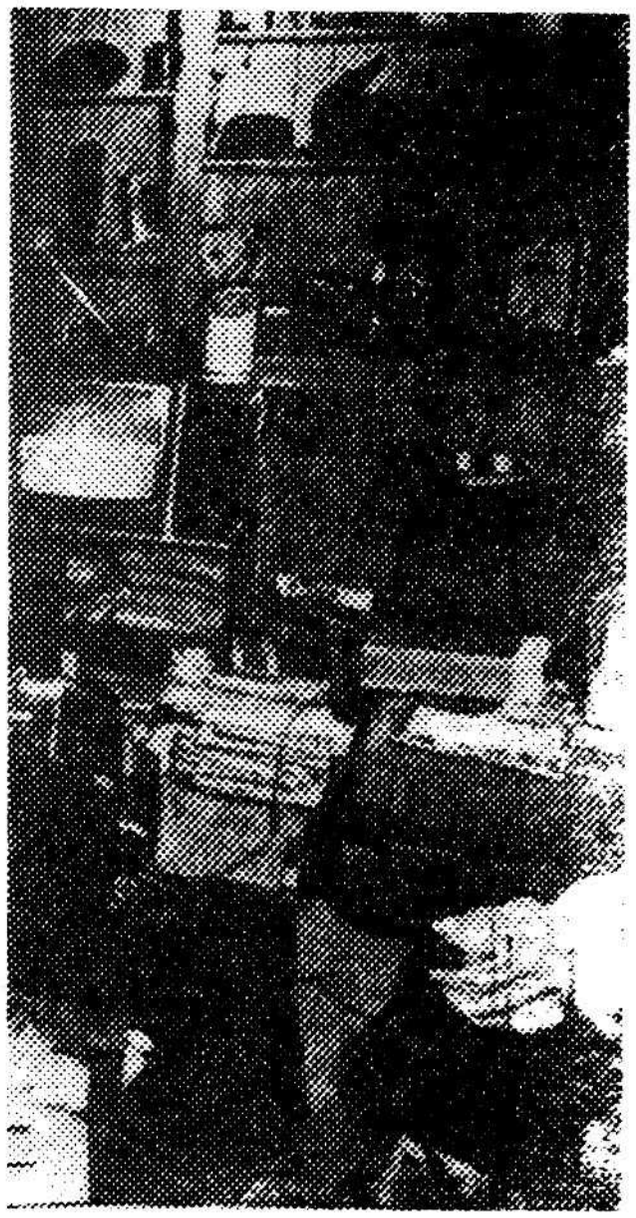
Gary's solo singing career ended with a drunken opening-night appearance in a Chicago club in 1961. (His first line to the audience: "I don't want to waste my time with you.") Says his first wife, Barbara Cosentino, a former Las Vegas dancer who separated from him in 1979 after 19 years of marriage, "When I got to Chicago to pick him up, he was dead drunk in his hotel room, and a lady was in his bed." Although he occasionally appeared on such TV series as *Chase* and *Emergency!* in the 1970s, Gary's reputation as a troublemaker crumbled his career. Says Barbara, "He was obsessed with the fact that he couldn't get a job and convinced that everybody hated him."

Only in recent years has his anger ebbed. A 1980 triple-bypass heart operation changed his outlook, as has AA. Nowadays, he says, "There aren't that many lows like those tremendous depths that I used to tumble into." Writing *Going My Own Way* may have exorcised some demons too. "It was something Gary had to do," says Lindsay.

Phillip, however, guards the family honor. Says he, "Gary has been an embarrassment to the family since he was in grade school." Replies Gary, "Phillip milks his position as Dad's son for everything he can get."

Keeper of the flame is indeed Phillip's full-time occupation. He lives alone in a three-bedroom Los Angeles home that is a mockery of the Holmby Hills mansion in which he was raised. Boxes of junk and piles of old magazines litter the rooms. A bathroom emits the smell of urine. In the den, two televisions play simultaneously. Empty milk cartons are stacked against the kitchen wall. In one corner, soft-drink and beer cans form a pyramid. The object of Phillip's game is to throw yet another can on the pyramid without disturbing the pile.

Phillip too has a history of drinking. But his approach is different from Gary's. "A man's got to believe in something," jokes Phillip, "and I believe I'll have another drink." In 1980 he was arrested on three occasions for drunken driving. Says he, smiling, "I don't drink anymore—but I don't drink any less." An 18-month stint with AA has proved ineffective. Phillip does not



"The book won't hurt the old man, but I sure wish he'd come back and have a few words with Gary," says Phillip, here in his den.

consider himself an alcoholic. "An alcoholic is someone who can't control his drinking. I can, but I don't want to."

Like his older brother, Phillip was first married to a Las Vegas lady—a showgirl named Sandra Jo Drummond. Second and third wives (Mary Joyce Gabbard and Georgi Edwards) were also Vegas showgirls. Says Phillip of Georgi, his favorite, "She was the only one who didn't have a cookie in the oven when I married her." The impending arrival of Phillip Jr. (one of his four children) prompted his marriage to fourth wife Peggy Dorris, a part-time actress. They divorced in 1975.

Phillip describes himself as a "saloon singer," and speaks wistfully of returning to "where I started, in the big rooms in Vegas." His last gig was at a 1982 Elks Club party in Burbank, Calif., where he was backed by a high school band. "From there," he says, "the only place I can go is up."

Phillip vehemently disputes most of the revelations in Gary's book. "We never got an extra whack or a cuff we didn't deserve," he insists. Nor does he believe that Dixie was an alcoholic. "If she was, she did a hell of a job disguising it." From his perspective, his parents had "a very good marriage." Phillip contends that he "understood Dad probably better than anybody in the whole family." He does not deny that Bing believed in corporal punishment. "When I was in high school, Dad caught me smoking in the barn at our ranch in Elko, Nev. There just happened to be a plank laying there, and he said, 'Assume the position.' "

But he harbors no resentment toward Bing. "If Dad had picked up a goddamn monkey wrench and said, 'Assume the position,' I would have done it." He savors the pleasant memories of his father, who was "very affable and easy to get along with." In his wallet he carries a letter from Bing signed "Love, Dad." Says Phillip, "I'd almost rather have that than a gold record or an Academy Award."

Twin brother Dennis has fashioned a far different life for himself. He has been married for 17 years to his second wife, Arleen, 38, whom he met when she was a secretary at Bing Crosby Inc., his father's business firm. The couple live with their daughters, Kelly Lee, 16, and Erin Colleen, 12, in Pebble Beach, Calif., the site of the annual Crosby National Pro-Am Golf Tournament. Both daughters are accomplished equestriennes, and Dennis, who does not work, describes his life as "calm and horsey."

Dennis too has a showgirl in his past. Unsurprisingly, his marriage to first wife Pat Sheehan was rocky from the start. Just days after the ceremony, a Los Angeles divorcée nailed Dennis with a paternity suit, which he subsequently lost. His last arrest for drunken driving was seven years ago, and Dennis says now, "I only drink beer." Gary says all the boys have had battles with the bottle, but it's a subject they never discuss. Says he, "My brothers are afraid I'm going to give them a little religion in the form of Alcoholics Anonymous."

Dennis professes little interest in rattling family skeletons. He is "a very easygoing person," according to wife Arleen, who has provided her husband with strong support over the years. Of all the Crosby boys' outlooks on the past, his is the most ambivalent. "I was happy to be who I was," he says, "even if I had the hell kicked out of me."

If any brother can make a claim to Bing's untainted affection, it is Lindsay. As Bing's favorite, he spent the

Lindsay, the youngest of the four, has no objection to his brother's book, *Going My Own Way*. "I hope it makes it easier on us," he says.

"I haven't had to go out and hustle," admits Dennis, with Arleen and daughters Erin and Kelly. "My children," he says, "are my work."

most time with his father. While the other sons went to boarding school, Lindsay lived at home. When the Crosby Boys act broke up, Lindsay went to work reading scripts for Bing. "I still miss him," says Lindsay, whose eyes frequently dampen when he discusses his father. "I probably didn't realize how much I'd miss him when he died."

In middle age, Lindsay looks more like a cowboy than a movie star's son. He drives a black Trans Am with the speakers blaring, a can of beer by his side. He keeps a stable of about a dozen quarter horses, which he hopes to breed. Of his three wives (dancer Barbara Frederickson, secretary Janet Schwartz and former Miss Alaska Susan Marlin) and four sons, Lindsay says, "I don't have any regrets but the hurt I've caused." Separated for five years from Susan, he shares a two-bedroom Los Angeles condo with his dogs, Olivia and Bear. Smiling, Lindsay says, "Olivia doesn't mind when I cheat on her."

Lindsay maintains the most tempered view of Bing. He does not dwell on the emotional toll of being a Crosby kid, but remembers "all the good things I did with my dad and forget the times that were rough." Of his father's discipline, he observes, "He was right on the button with all the important things." He dismisses Bing's distance as immaterial. "I never expected affection from my father so it didn't bother me." Of the war between Bing and Gary, he says simply, "They were both wrong and they were both right."

Gary concedes that Bing's parental style was perhaps only a more extreme version of the conventional thinking of the day. Bing "was like a lot of fathers of that time. He was not out to be vicious, to beat children for his kicks." Bob Crosby acknowledges that his brother Bing was "a disciplinarian" but adds, "My mother and father were like that. We were brought up that way."

Apparently Bing was not as harsh and demanding with the children from his second marriage. In the acknowledgments of *Going My Own Way*, Gary addresses Kathryn and her three children: "I think you'll find the Bing Crosby here a rather different man from the one you knew." Kathryn has insisted that Bing "was the best father he could be to all his children," but she admits that he was embarrassed to express affection. "That's your good Jesuit boys' school upbringing," she says. Gary and Kathryn are on good terms, and he in fact stayed with Kathryn, a registered nurse, during part of his recovery from heart surgery. He calls her "a great wife to my father and a great mother to their children."

In the last year of his father's life, Gary affected a tentative reconciliation with Bing. Gary and his then wife, Barbara, occasionally spent weekends with Kathryn and Bing at the Crosby estate outside San Francisco. Recalls Gary, "One day he said, 'Take a walk with me around the grounds.' We didn't talk about anything special, but somehow I felt the war was over. For all those years, I was the only one fighting. Goddamn it, he wasn't. When I look back, he wasn't."

Observes Gary in a reflective moment, "In music, Bing was the greatest thing there ever was. As far as raising kids, he didn't have a clue. I was going to say that if I could have had it either way, I'd rather have had it the way I did. But that isn't true." Try as he might, being Bing's son may be a role Gary cannot shake.

Written by SCOT HALLER, reported by MARIA WILHELM

On a 1974 TV special, Bing clowned with his second family: from left, Nathaniel, Mary Frances, Kathryn and Bing's namesake, Harry Jr.

(Cont. from page 9 - Gary Crosby interview)

I: Privately, how did he change from that public image we had?

G: Well publicly, that man was there...that's definitely part of him. I can recall when I worked with him. Whenever anyone would work with him, he was the greatest person in show business...because if you made a mistake, he made light of it...you did something wrong, "Don't worry, we'll do it again" and he'd laugh at it and make errors himself. He was very understanding that way.
When he got home, he was like a lot of the fathers of my generation. And that's that they laid down the law, "This is how it is", and if they weren't obeyed there were no excuses and punishment was metered out in a very methodical, judgemental fashion. No insanity,no ranting or raving, no yelling and screaming - nothing like that.
If a whipping was in store, you got a whipping.

I: Were there a lot of whippings?

G: Well for me there were a lot! I had kind of a quick mouth in those days, I still do; if I see something funny it jumps out of there before I can stop it. Well, you do that at school and the nuns would laugh a couple of times; you do it a third time and they'd lay on you. And when you got nailed at school, it got home and you'd get punished at home as well as at school.
I got it for my weight; he decided that my hind end was too big, and needed to come down, and he probably was right.

I: He used to have affectionate little terms he would call each one of you boys?

G: Well a lot of parents do that; he wasn't alone, but I can remember they hurt me an awful lot.

I: What did he call you?

G: I was either 'bucket-butt' or 'satchel-ass'. So you can tell how much I liked to hang around with him and his friends. Cos' they all laughed like crazy and I was about that small, wanting to kill all of them and not big enough to do it.

I: He was very big that you children would not consider yourselves special being Bing Crosby's sons...to the point of almost being a fanatic about it. What did he do to counter your feeling special about yourselves?

G: Well, we weren't allowed to feel special about ourselves. 'You're no better than anybody else' was the saying. I didn't hear 'You're no worse than anybody else' but I heard a lot about 'You're no better than anybody else.' The idea is to stay there in the crowd and just be there. You know, blot your name tag, pull your hat low and don't make waves. It kind of stifles any creativity, any instincts like that that you have...because you damn sure don't want to do anything that will make you stand out.

I: Did you consider your father a very strong man?

G: The strongest. I still think he's one of the strongest-willed human beings I've ever met in my life. He's done some things that I never heard of anybody else being able to do.

I: Like what?

G: He just decided one day that it was time to quite smoking and he quit ; put cigarettes down, never picked them up again. He'd mess around with one every now and then or he went to his pipe and never inhaled it. And from what I understand, he was drinking a lot before he got married; then he married my mother and she didn't want to have that anymore, so he stopped. Now he didn't stop totally, like you have to do if you're like me, if you're an alcolholic, he just quit and he'd have a drink every now and then at a party - a watered down Scotch...that was fine with him. I think I saw him loaded twice in my life. He just had total command.

I: Now I'm assuming that the four of you had trouble really relating to this strong figure...is that true?

G: Oh you bet.

I: Is it true that all of you had difficulty living up to what he expected of you?

G: I can only speak for myself in that I always felt from the beginning that there was no way to win. There's too many rules, I'll never keep them all and I'm gonna get my butt busted anyway so what can I do? And I would keep as many as I could but I always felt 'I can never please this guy, there's no way to ever make him happy.

I: Now I know your mother had difficulty with alcohol during her life..

G: My mother was an alcoholic.

I: And you were in your late teens when she died?

G: Yes, eighteen.

I: And then you boys have all had problems with drinking.

G: That's the amazing thing to me...how I could possibly become an alcoholic after what I'd seen in my home. It's a pattern and it's there and you pick it up.

I: Now when Bing remarried and he and Kathryn had three children, why the big difference? One's in law school, one's a golfer, and Mary Francis is an actress. Did he mellow out as he got older?

G: I think he did, at least from what I saw about the house. Also he did mention in one or two interviews that he had been too strict with us, and that he felt he had and that he was going to change that.

I: D idn't he say that to Nanette Fabray?

G: To Nanette he said he felt that because we were who we were, everybody out there was going to butter us up and give us everything we wanted. So he was going to make sure that we found out that life was a lot tougher than those people lead us to believe. My contention is that what he didn't know was that people out there think that each one of them is going to be the one to teach you that life isn't easy. Only they don't communicate with one another so that each thinks that he is the one that's going to do it. And you run into a whole lot of people who are going to let you know that life is a whole lot tougher than you think it is.

I: Now everybody is going to be either pro or con about you writing this book. And the question comes up, are we talking here about making some money? But I prefer to leave that at rest. I think if anybody had the opportunity to write a book they would write a book. Either by themselves or with somebody. But I'd like to ask you, are you writing this book to let people know that your father was not perfect or are you writing it to explain why his sons are not perfect?

G: I think I'm writing it for several reasons and one is that there is no way a human being could be the way that his image was. That's Father Christmas, that's Father O'Malley. But people thought he was. I would constantly have people come up to me and I'd see

the look die in their eyes when they see that I am not what they expect, which is the son of the image! I couldn't be that. And while I was trying to show him as a human being, by doing that I'm trying to show where I went wrong and what happened to me. I hope that's what I'm doing. I hope that I can help somebody out there who's raising kids .

I: As you said, he's not unlike a lot of fathers.

G: A lot of guys Iknew of my age - we all ducked our fathers - man, our fathers laid down the law and we didn't give them any argument. We got the hell out of the way.

I: Well you're on the road now and good luck with the book Gary.

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Well, that's how Gary responds to a middle-ground interviewer. But just to show you how his manner changed depending on how the questions were couched, here's a short extract from another interview in which the questioner had a very definite point of view.

I: The names he called you, you were humiliated by your dad in front of his friends. The references to your weight.

G: They all thought that was funny. And they'd look at me and kind of say 'what's the matter, can't you take it?' I never liked anybody calling me anything. But you couldn't say anything to your father so I'd sit there and just take it. But I wouldn't smile and he'd accuse me of pouting. But I didn't like them, you're damn right I didn't like them. When I was little I can remember saying to myself, wait til I get half as big as you guys.

I: And then what Gary?

G: I'd want to tear him to pieces man. I had fantasies in my head of ripping their heads off, and him too. And everybody else just stomping on them and ripping them to pieces. But I could never show it.

I: And if this isn't bad enough, you can't even appeal to your mother because at times she is whipping you, at times she's drinking too much, at times you're discovering her problems. This book is extraordinary! You're aware of the way your mother is being, may I say the word, oppressed by your father, and you're talking to the press about how happy the family is and inside your're seething!

G: You got it. That's it, right on the head. (LET'S STOP HERE. BM)

The Herald, Sat., April 9, 1983

The smear campaign by Bing's boy

Gary's sour song

THERE'S nothing new in kids killing parents. It's been happening since pre-historic days.

Recently, however, the deed has been done more effectively with the pen than with the sword.

It's probably too much to hope that the latest in the genre — Gary Crosby's book "Going My Own Way" — will be the last.

Once we've been told that the easy-going, pipe-smoking, genial Bing Crosby, who enchanted us in "White Christmas", who reduced us to tears in "Bells of St Mary's", and whose voice really did soothe the savage breast, was a sadistic child beater, a womaniser who drove his wife to drink, and a cold fish incapable of giving or receiving love, what can ever shock us again?

· It may be the truth. It may be untrue. But do any of us want our celluloid heroes cruelly debunked in this way?

For Crosby junior, the eldest of Bing's brood, it means attention and a few moments back in the limelight from which he has been long absent.

Forty-nine-year-old Gary was the biggest tearaway. Despite a privileged childhood of private schools and life in a mansion with servants, he was in trouble almost from birth.

BUT despite their early battles, Bing tried to help the boy when he decided he too wanted to be a singer. He gave him his own agent and got jobs for him with his many friends.

Bob Hope, Bing's old friend and partner, recalls: "I put that kid on my show all the time just to please Bing."

Despite the push in the right direction Gary and his brothers spent a lot of their time dallying in Las Vegas, where they became part of the scenery around that gambling town's exotic show-girls, several of whom they married.

There was too much booze and too much money. But still their father didn't cut them off.

In 1961 it was Bing who signed the cheques to pay for Gary's alcoholism treatments. Finally his son brawled and womanised and caroused himself right out of any career he might have had and, in the end, no one would give him a job — not even for Bing's sake.

Now his father's friends are appalled at his vicious attacks on Bing.

Says Bob Hope: "The whole thing has upset me very much. Bing was my good friend. If that's what they do to you when you've gone — I'm not going."

Bing's long-time publicist and friend Maury Foladare, who worked with him for 40 years, makes it clear what she thinks of Gary's book.

"In 40 years I never saw Bing do anything to his kids but bat their butts occasionally. Every parent does that — but until they bled? That's just not true."

Kathryn Crosby, Bing's second wife, is equally unimpressed by Gary's book. "Gary is full of hate. He has been making up these stories since he was a little boy.

"If he was beaten obviously he wasn't beaten enough, because he didn't learn anything. All I know is that in our family I had to do the spanking. Bing hated unpleasantness."

Happily, it's unlikely that Gary will sell the four million copies that Christina Crawford chalked up with "Mommie Dearest", the book in which she takes her mother, actress Joan Crawford, to pieces.

And many of the same charges have already been made in an earlier book about Bing, "The Hollow Man." Gary's nasty volume may still do better than some other examples of the genre.

Years ago, two of Charlie Chaplin's offspring, Sydney and Michael, savaged the little tramp in print.

Groucho Marx's son Arthur revealed scant regard for his papa in his tome.

Peter Sellers' son Michael shocked tender souls when he revealed in "PS: I Love You" that the ex-Goon was often hard to endure.

But why rush to publish family secrets? Why puncture our balloons, destroy our illusions, reveal the parental feet of clay? Why can't they all just shut up?

The obvious answer is money and fame. Somebody once said all happy families are much the same and nobody's going to pay to hear that Bing was the father of the year.

For Christina Crawford, though, her hatchet job on Joan, her adoptive mother, was a question of sanity.

"It was my psychiatrist who encouraged me to write it," she said. "I was 37 years old and it was time to tell the truth."

It is difficult to decide how much genuine cruelty these children were subjected to.

But Christina Crawford has no

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And many of the same charges have already been made in an doubt that it was child abuse in her case. Yet even Christina was outraged at the movie version of her book.

"They turned my mother into a camp horror queen," she said. "How dare they do that to her."

Gary Crosby, however, seems in his book to be after revenge — revenge for the beatings with a studded belt, for the name calling — "Bucket Butt" was one of the more repeatable attached to the tubby kid — revenge for the harsh Jesuit boarding school and especially for the years since — the alcoholism, the brushes with the law, the marriages, the shows where he didn't turn up or was sick on stage.

You've got to blame someone for all that and a famous father, particularly a dead one, makes an easy target.

THE sons of Bing's first family have scarcely measured up to their father's standards.

Between the four of them they have 11 marriages, a paternity suit, multiple drunk-driving arrests and two memberships of Alcoholics Anonymous.

None is presently gainfully employed. They live off a trust fund, established by their mother.

By common consent, however, Gary had the hardest time with dad. His brother Lindsay, the baby of the family and Bing's favorite says, he's glad Gary was finally able to get it all off his chest.

"The only difference between him and me," he said, "is that I never expected affection from my father so it didn't bother me."

Gary says his troubles drove him to take up his pen. "I considered myself a dumb stupid ass who wasn't going to amount to anything. I had to get the house of horror out of my head."

Perhaps if Kathryn Crosby's self-serving version of life with Bing had been less sugar-coated, Gary's could have been less bleak.

The image-conscious Mrs Crosby can't even bring herself to admit that Bing's first wife, Dixie Lee, the mother of his first four sons, was an alcoholic.

The real truth about Bing probably lies somewhere between the two versions.

From SALLY OGLE DAVIS
in Hollywood

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TRADING POST

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Introducing a new free service to members with anything to sell or exchange or even advertise for. Obviously, space will be limited so please keep your lists to a reasonable size. Also, please write direct to the advertiser; we are acting purely as a publicity service and cannot accept any responsibility for the condition of items offered nor non-fulfilment of arrangements.

Leading off, we have a list of items for sale to the highest bidder. These are offered by Albert Murray, 308 Lower Plateau Road, Bilgola, NSW 2107, Australia.

1. There's a cabin in the pines/ I've got to pass your house (Col DO1150). 2. Wrap your troubles in dream/non-Bing (Regal Zonophone EE261) - two copies. 3. Lazy Day/Young and Healthy (Col DB 2029). 4. After Sundown/Beautiful Girl (Col DO 1093). 5. Last round-up/Dream Walking (Col DO 1086) - two copies. 6. Temptation/We'll make hay (Col DO 1094). 7. Blue Prelude/ Our big love scene (Col DO 1085). 8. Please/Waltzing in a dream (Col DO 1095). 9. Try a Little Tenderness/How deep is the ocean (Col DB 1985). 10. Some of these days/Sweet Georgia Brown (Col DP 1431). 11. Once in a blue moon/ Love Thy Neighbour (Col DO 1182). 12. I kiss your hand madam/Till we meet (Col DB 2036) 13. The day you came along/Guess it had to be (Col DO 1090) 2 copies. 14. June in January/Love is just around the corner (Blue US Decca 310A) 15. Straight from shoulder/Humming whistling singing (Col DO 1283). 16. Thanks/Black Moonlight (Col DO 1089) 2 copies. 17. Learn to croon/Moonstruck (Col DO 1091). 18. Gay Love/Can't we be friends (Col DB 2035). 19. You've got me crying again/Getting to be habit. 20. Two for tonight/Wished on moon (Blue US Decca 543) 21. Goodnight lovely little lady/May I? (Col DO 1183). 22. Let's spend an evening at home/Home on range (Col DO 1087). 23. A fine romance/Way you look (Decca Y5125). 24. Can't we talk it over/Dinah (Brunswick 01271). 25. Paradise/Honey's loving arms (Col DB1971) 26. Ghost of chance/Gabriel's horn (Col DO 1432) 27. Love in bloom/Heart to sing to (Col DO 1289). 28.Black Moonlight/Street of Dreams (Col DB 2085). 29. You're still in my heart/You're beautiful tonight (Col DB 2123) 30.Our big love scene/Blue Prelude. (Col DB 2123) 31. St Louis Blues (12") DOX 560.

Albert also has eight un-named Rhythm Boy discs. Suggest you write.

Rob Twiddy, 4 Margaret Street, Langwarrin, Victoria 3910, Australia is looking for the following LP's.

Young Bing Crosby - RCA Japan - double set
Original Sounds of the 20's - US Columbia - 3LP Boxed set
Distinctively Bing - Vol 1 & 2 - Sunbeam
Bing - Harry Lillis Crosby - US Columbia
Where the Blue of the Night - Biograph US
Great singers of the 30's - Fanfare US
Bing Crosby on the Air - Vol 1 - Spokane

plus any film or radio tracks of the 20's or 30's on LP with Bing.

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ANOTHER NEW IDEA - A CORRESPONDENCE LIST

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Richard Pearson has come up with an idea which may be of interest to a number of members - and that is that we should start a correspondence list.

This list could include such information on whether members would like to trade or buy tapes or LP's or sheet music or photos... or simply just write to each other.

Always happy to provide additional services for the membership, we'll be happy to print the names and addresses of anyone who is interested. Just let us know.

If you'd like to write to Richard, his address appears on page 1 of this magazine!

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DID ANYONE SEE THE RECENT MOVIE 'FRANCES'?

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A few weeks back I received a letter from a member who had seen the movie on the life of actress Frances Farmer. Apparently Bing is heard in one scene in the film and this member was wondering what the name of the song was that he sang. I haven't seen the movie and am not planning to. Can anyone help?

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THE FABULOUS ED RICE TAPES

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Ed Rice & John Scott Trotter

By Vernon Wesley Taylor

While Edward A. Rice was still a young man he was already an important collector of the works of Bing Crosby. He was in constant communication with other collectors around the world, writing articles for magazines and supplying data for anyone seeking information on the singer. His hobby had given him direction and purpose as good hobbies are inclined to do.

Then in a dramatic twist of fate, he lost it all. His collection had to be sold suddenly, for whatever it would bring because his mother faced an unexpected and serious operation. Without a murmer, he made the arrangements for an international auction.

When the crisis had passed and his mother was recovering, he began another collection. Using the same drive and energy, he started again from the bottom. The frustration of his loss drove him mercilessly. Every waking spare moment that he could find from his job as a commercial baker was given over to his passion, for now it was more than a hobby. New ideas and the courage to pursue them became commonplace.

He scraped acquaintance with showbusiness people, especially those in films and broadcasting. He made himself useful in the proper places until , finally, even Bing himself heard of him and asked him for help in putting his own collection in library-order.

Bing had moved his record collection from his couse at Pebble Beach to his Holmby Hills residence and it had arrived there in total confusion.

For almost three months Ed spent most of his weekends at the Crosbys, assiduously pouring over thousands of items, cataloguing, making notations, identifying, arranging. Members of the household were openly curious. The children, still very young, often watched, asked questions, ventured opinions. Ed was in very heaven.

It was through John Scott Trotter, Bing's principal music director and orchestra-leader that Rice was invited to help Bing. Sometime before this, a mutual friend had given him Trotter's address and, rather than waste time writing letters, he simply drove to the musician's apartment and knocked at the door. Curious and interested after a few preliminary remarks, he was invited in. Each quickly discovered the other was sincerely devoted to the music of Bing Crosby. In a few minutes, they were chatting like old friends. Their common interest forged immediate and lasting bonds. Rice found Trotter to be a warm and friendly person, still possessed of the refreshing wonder of music; bright, intelligent, quick humoured. The relationship which began that day endured until Trotter died.

During one of his visits, Ed casually asked John Scott whether he had ever kept any of the reference recordings of the old Kraft Music Hall and was thrilled to learn that indeed they had been kept, most of them, anyway. In fact, he was told, they were actually beneath their feet. John Scott laughed at Rice's reaction. He took Ed outside and around the building and pointed to a small access-door. In an instant his guest was under the floor.

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COLLECTOR'S
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This time we feature the covers of four rare EP's - each interesting in its own right.

'Bing Sings' on English Brunswick features four tracks that at one stage were only ever issued in that country and on this 45 rpm disc. In the late 1960's, three of the tracks appeared on a long-unavailable (now) LP entitled 'Rare Style'. The fourth track 'Moments to Remember' has <u>never</u> been re-issued commercially.

'It's a Good Day' is an <u>Australian</u> issue from the late 60's also and features four tracks recorded by Bing for RCA in 1960. Only 'It's a Good Day' and 'The Music of Home' were issued at the time and it wasn't until a well-known South Australian collector convinced RCA here to issue the remaining sides on an EP, that all four were finally released. Until they turned up on a Japanese LP a couple of years ago, the songs were available nowhere else.

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CORNER
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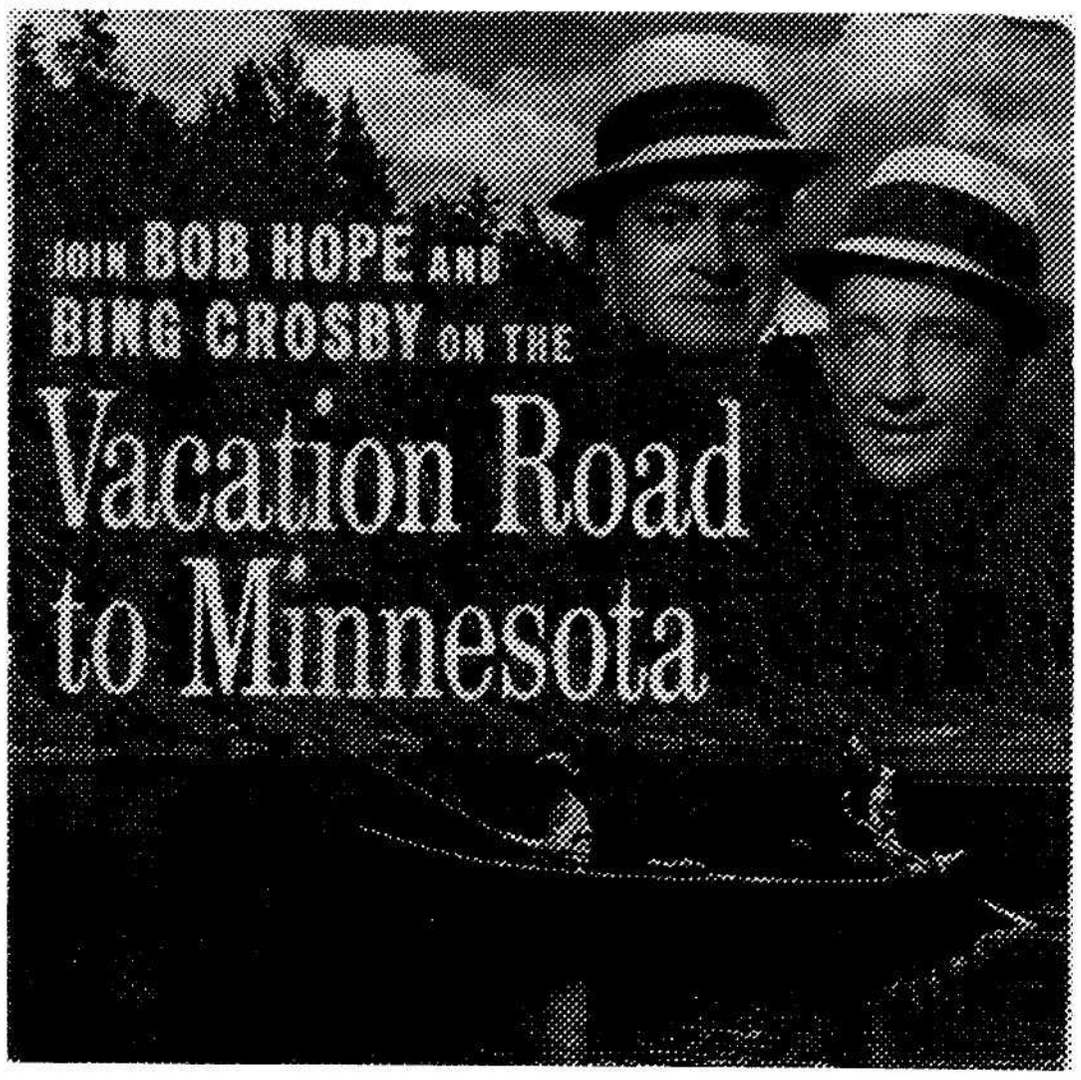
'Peace and Blessing' is a most unusual EP for the time from Bing. Recorded on November 4th, 1954, side 1 features 'Peace Prayer of Saint Francis' and side 2, 'Blessing of Saint Francis'. Issued only on Decca in the USA and Brunswick in England, it became quite a rare item until reissued on an Ace of Hearts LP 'Beloved Hymns' in the late 60's. The cover states that the record was issued 'for the cause of Fr. Junipero Serra' so Bing most likely donated his services to the project.

'Vacation Road to Minnesota' was a non-commercial issue featuring Bing and Bob Hope and was probably recorded around 1961. It was issued on the Capitol label and was produced by the Department of Business Development, State of Minnesota. The record is interesting only because it features Crosby and Hope; other than that it is poorly written and produced and the two stars sound a little disinterested in the whole thing! For those who <u>are</u> interested, the record is included on 'Collectors Items 2' cassette in the club's cassette library.



Rice discovered several dusty stacks of records, mostly ten-inch mixed with a few twelve. Carrying an armload into the apartment, he carefully looked them over. They were white-faced 78's and appeared to have been used very little, though many were without sleeve covers and had particles of sand, here and there, pressed into their surfaces. Their playing-quality, he found, left much to be desired, but perhaps much of that could be repaired by the cleaning and Tender Loving Care of the collector.

John Scott seemed as interested and told Ed of how he had made use of some of them, such as comparing musical passages or checking a number with Bing they planned to repeat. Mostly, they were Bing solos with pieces of dialogue before and after, but they also contained bits of dialogue by the show's cast and the guests, many Kraft product commercials, introductions, and sign-offs. They were not complete shows but , perhaps, all the songs were on them. Think of it!

Ed Rice kept his outward calm. Few collectors had ever been in such a remarkable position. He had heard tales of others and of how they discovered this fabulous rarity or that unknown rendition but here there were hundreds, hidden beneath a floor. He stared at them as if he were Carter in King Tut's burial chamber, he listened to them. Through his tense thoughts, John Scott's pleasant southern drawl drifted. Perhaps no other would ever have such an opportunity. How should be go about it? How should he phrase his question to this genial, rotund man beside him? He took the only way be knew, the simple direct approach.

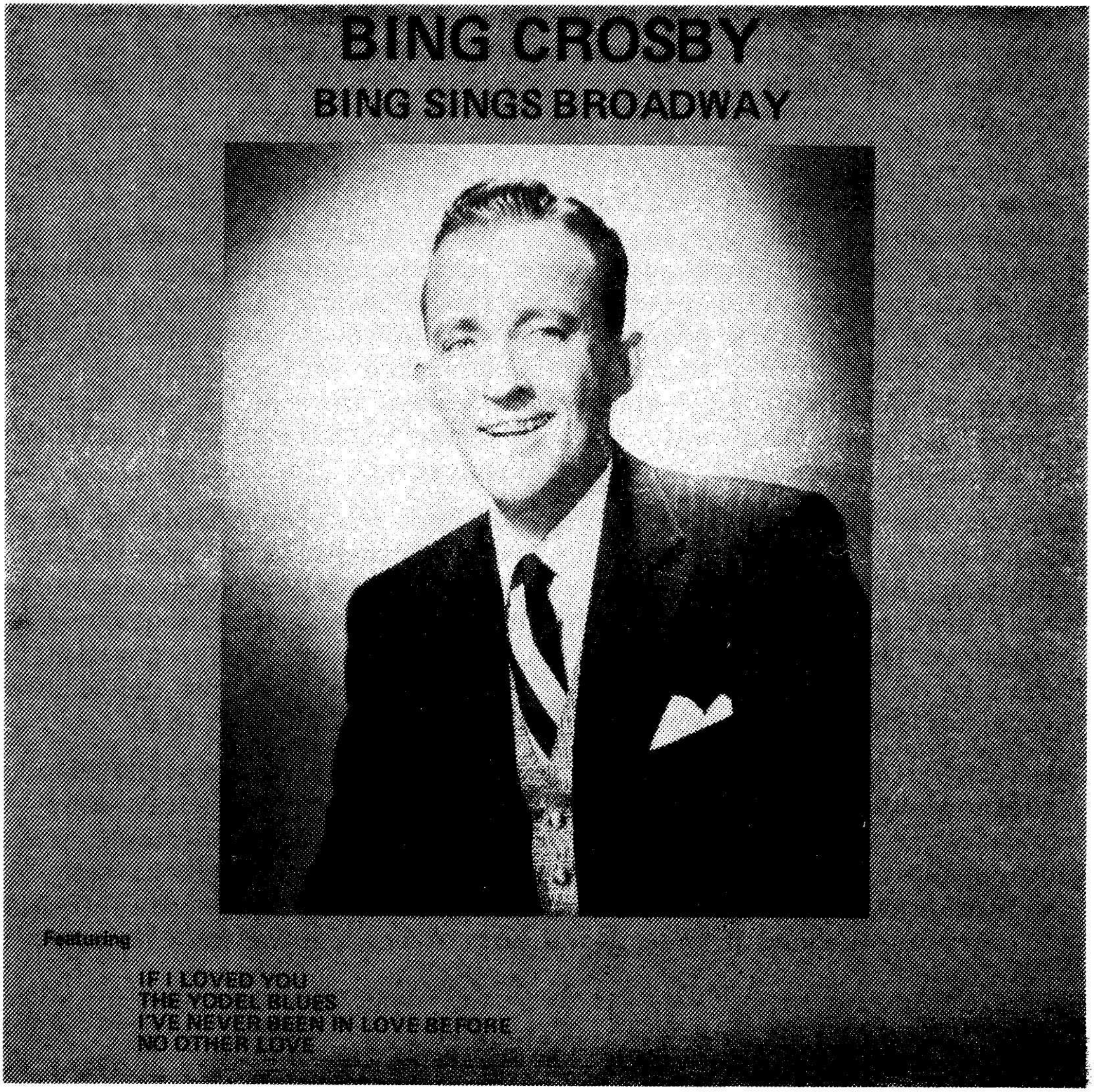
Would it be possible to borrow some of them, maybe several, maybe ALL, for transcribing onto tape? Would John Scott allow this, if every care were taken? Trotter hesitated. These were valuable one-of-a-kind things, never made for public use. These days, he and Bing were into more modern arrangements. Still, they had a value for radio historians, in fact, he was even then considering donating them to a western university who was anxious to use them as study-resource material.

Ed pointed out how there was a golden opportunity here to preserve this once very popular style of orchestral composition. Bing had a vast worldwide legion of followers. With copies of this stuff in their hands, preservation would be assured. It would be listened to, loved, appreciated.

Cont/.....31

"BING SINGS BROADWAY" - MCA - MCL 1730

This new LP from England was reviewed in the last edition of the Crosby Voice. Unfortunately, it is still not available in Australia and may not be released here due to a change in international tie-ups of record companies. However, it is worth getting from the U.K. as it does feature a number of hard-to-find tracks. Pity that the cover is uninspiring. The photograph isn't even in colour!



(Ed Rice tapes, from page 29)

To such affecionadoes this was not corn but precious music. Nostalgia was a way of life to the Crosby buff.

Trotter demurred. He was a professional to his fingertips and hair ends. Would it be fair to the men and women who had worked on these shows to just give their performances away? Bing disliked this sort of thing, himself. Wouldn't there be legal snags? It was this very problem that kept most of the entertainers from cooperating with the amateur collectors. Many of them looked down on this sort of thing as a kind of disease and those who had it as pests, out for whatever they could get their hands on. Trotter did not feel this way, but...

Ed ignored that and ploughed on with the tenacity of the true-born 'Bing-Nut' (though he disliked the term). Hadn't hundreds of other old broadcasts already disappeared without a trace, thanks to such reasoning? Some of these best were lost forever or, just as bad, buried in college libraries, unavailable to any but bored students writing term papers. The ways of such gross losses were many: Spoilage, fire, whole files consigned to the trash-hauler merely to obtain storage-space. And always because it was not 'legal' to give them away. What is wrong with letting a small section of the public own what had been broadcast to the world?

Trotter was silent. Rice persisted. Here was the chance to do the right thing for once, something truly worthwhile, if unorthodox. This way, Bing and John Scott would not be forgotten in possibly their best period, their formative radio years. They would not be smothered in the limbo of some musty library or vault. Instead, they would be in hundreds of active, living collections the world over. Every day their music would be heard and would never die.

Besides, didn't Bing, himself, work hard to be remembered? Hadn't he recorded every conceivable kind of song in order to reach every conceivable kind of listener? Wasn't he forever granting interviews and appearing on guest-spots of all kinds, even though he was now in 'semi-retirement'? Most important, didn't Bing promise to make at least one record a year so as not to disappoint his friends, the collectors?

John Scott threw up his hands and laughed. Alright, alright, Eddie, you win. Take them home, put them on tape. Do what you like. I agree.

Rice was overjoyed but only for a moment. What about the money these people would pay? Surely there would be trouble about that? Ed assured him that there would be no trouble because there would be no profits. The costs could not be much more than it would take to buy the reels of tape, use of the equipment for making the copies, the wrapping and mailing, the labour...Trotter gave up and in moments Rice was back in the crawl space tugging out his treasure.

For the next many months, well into 1963, he was once more giving up his spare time for his hobby, but never before with such enthusiasm. His weekends and evening flew by on the wings of song: Bingsong. Of the approximately 500 most were clear enough to tape, despite the 'pops' and 'clicks'. He also compiled a complete list, detailing all the known data, and sent them out to fellow-collectors everywhere. Soon the reels went on their way into their vital living future. Of course they would be copied endlessly, that was expected. Even the list became a kind of classic publication, still used among the 'fans'. Over the following years, the songs popped up on 'oldtime' radio broadcasts and records. These, too, are prized 'collectors' items'. The Ed Rice Kraft Music Hall songs would become dearly familiar to thousands, as he had promised.

And they still have value, despite the U.S. government issues of many of the later Kraft broadcasts to the armed forces during World War 2 (and which the collectors found),because they are a long compilation of Bing at his most casual. They are superior in this way to the more formal phonograph records, where Crosby sounds as if he is working harder, trying to achieve more. The Kraft Music Hall producer, Carroll Carroll, once said that Bing sang with only half his voice on the shows. This lends enormous appeal. Here he is still young, full of savoire faire. The world he sang to was growing pregnant with the beat of history yet he so very lightly sang those ten years of Kraft Thursdays they hang on, unforgotten in the mind. Never again was Bing Crosby quite so easy and carefree.

Rice is 70 today and he still voraciously 'collects Bing'. At the moment he is busy working with Broadway Records, putting together a series of long-play records made from his famous list. In the next year or two there is certain to be more.

Sweet indeed are the uses of adversity. Because a young man was forced to sell his prized collection in order that his mother could receive adequate medical care, he was goaded to invade where other mortals could fear to tread and thus all of us are the better for it, and Bing Crosby and John Scott Trotter are able to be heard by happy hobbyists everywhere, on the Fabulous Ed Rice Tapes. (END) (Now see page 35)

Les keeps happy in the groove

Les O'Donnell is a record collector who has gone beyond the norm by building a studio for his hobby at his Bulimba home.

Les became the proud owner of his grandmother's wind-up phonograph and record collection in the 1930s and soon contracted collectamania (avid hoarding) which afflicts all hobbyists.

He was hit in the 1940s by an extreme form known as Crosbyitis, and, ever since, has spent most of his time and money buying Bing Crosby, listening to Bing Crosby, and talking of Bing Crosby.

He recuperates after every four hours by sipping tea to oil the vocal chords (Chords?).

When Les left school after World War II, he invested money in an electrical pick-up, mounted it on a wind-up gram for 78 rpm records, and connected this to a console radio with a large speaker.

He kept experimenting with home-made amplifiers and turntables, and when the first LPs came out in the USA he imported copies via the UK, then converted his equipment to play them.

By the late 1950s, Les says, "My LP collection was increasing, I decided to get rid of many 78s, as I had about 3000."

Why discard them? A question in reply: Have you tried to walk with a box of just 40 shellac 78 rpm records, without falling over?

Les still has 40 of those featuring Bing.

Most of Bing is now on LPs and tape, and "these total about 1160 single tracks by Bing."

Les collects other artists, e.g., Vera Lynn and Mantovani; and still has granny's old records, such as the one with the wedding of King George V and Queen Mary on June 22, 1911.

But Bing puts the zing in Les's life.

Now . . . anyone with 519 shellac discs; 1112 LPs; and 891 tapes (7 in reels) obviously needs a studio.

Les, therefore, built one.

His studio has a sound room, filled with grams, recorders, control panels, another room for storage of records, etc., library style.

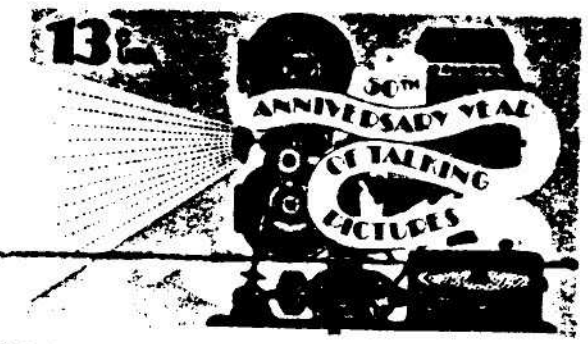
It also has a huge "listening" lounge with chairs, speakers linked to the sound room; and, of course, a TV set for rare unmusical visitors.

Les is in two Crosby clubs: the Victorian Bing Crosby Society, and the only official Club Crosby (USA) founded in 1936, of which Bing was patron.

Your ears sing when you leave Les's studio, sounding like a needle stuck in a groove, crooning over and over: Bing! Bing! Bing! Bing! Bing!

Thanks to Karl Dobbie who wrote this newspaper article on a freelance basis.

First Day of Issue



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

BING CROSBY
1944
GOING MY WAY

50th Anniversary Of Talking Motion Pictures

SOUTHERN CROSS, SEPTEMBER 28, 1945

Bing Crosby Club

The first meeting of the Brighton branch of the 3AW Bing Crosby Club was held at the home of Mrs W. Clarke, 672 Hampton street, Brighton, last Sunday. The meeting was opened by Mr Peter Ellis, who showed keen interest in his wide spreading organisation. The branch has not yet begun its activities, but shows great promise of being a highly successful affair. Many members have already enrolled and those nominated for the committee are keen to make the club a success. The vice-president, Mrs Honeybone urges young people to join this worthy cause. Proceeds will benefit various charities and all intending members will be assured of a good time. Membership fee 2/ per annum, and an attraccive badge can be had for 1/6. As soon as the club is in full swing, its intentions are to form a juvenile branch of the younger ones. More shall be heard of this bright suggestion.

Mrs Honeybone is anxious for a Bing Crosby Dance Band to be formed for their Brighton branch, and has some novel ideas to suggest. Aspiring members who would like to help form this band contact the vice-president, Mrs Honeybone, 672 Hampton street, or phone WX2913 between 9 and 5 p.m. week days and 9 to 1 Saturays.

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NEW RECORD RELEASES

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"THE FABULOUS ED RICE TAPES - 1937" - Crosbyana Vol 2

The first LP alluded to in Vern Taylor's article has been released. We can do no better than quote from the cover notes:

"Of the twenty-one selections on this album, only six selections were recorded and released commercially on 78 rpm records, the remaining sides are available for this first time on this album. If you have the commercially released versions of the six that were issued, it is fun to compare them. These sides are (along with their commercially recorded dates:) IT'S THE NATURAL THING TO DO (7/12/37); SAIL ALONG SILVERY MOON (9/11/37); SMARTY (7/12/37); CAN I FORGET YOU (9/20/37); THE MOON GOT IN MY EYES (7/12/37); and THE FOLKS WHO LIVE ON THE HILL(9/20/37).
We have included the two broadcast versions of THE MOON GOT IN MY EYES from 10/21/37 and 11/11/37 broadcasts. Bob Burns appears on two of the selections IT'S THE NATURAL THING TO DO and SAIL ALONG SILVERY MOON (which also features William Frawley). Bob Burns and Bing Crosby hit it off immediately and also with the fans of Music Hall. Burns invented (or was credited) the bazooka, a quasi-musical instrument that was named for the sound that it made.

Andy Secrest, who worked with Bing Crosby in the Paul Whiteman band, takes the trumpet solos on SMILES, REMEMBER ME, SMARTY, THAT OLD FEELING, SWEET LITTLE YOU and I DON'T WANT TO GET WELL."

Unfortunately, the list we have been supplied with doesn't have all the titles noted, but you should get a good idea from the above.

We will ultimately be importing copies of this LP for sale to members. However, if you can't wait til then, write direct to Stan Hester, Broadway Intermission Records, Box 244, Milford, Mi 48042, USA. Quoted price per disc is US$7.00 and I believe that that also includes postage, but you'd better write first.

NOTE TO ALL MEMBERS WHO ORDERED "THROUGH THE YEARS".

Your LP's have been ordered and are on the way. In fact, we expect them in plenty of time for our meeting on October 17th. If you know now that you won't be attending on the evening and would like your record mailed to you, drop us a line.

BING AND AL - THE GOLDEN DUETS - (Label unknown) BT- 0001

Another new LP out of the USA features a number of duets taken from the Crosby/Jolson radio shows of the late 1940's. For full details, please write to Morbros International, PO Box 414201, Miami Beach, Florida, USA 33141. We will probably be importing copies of this disc in the new year also.

14 LP SET OF BIX BIEDERBECKE

A company known as Publishers Centreal Bureau have issued a 14LP set featuring the complete works of Bix. Bing in the Whiteman era is represented on tracks on several of the discs and if this set duplicates the Italian 'Joker' issue of several years ago, then it will have every take of every record, which certainly makes it worth having.
The price is an exceptionally low US$41.99 plus postage. If you are interested, write to the company direct:

Publishers Central Bureau, Dept 213, 1 Champion Avenue, Avenel, N.J. 07131, USA. I'm told they'll accept payment by Visa, Master Card or American Express.

SINGLE BING TRACKS CAN BE FOUND ON:

"Runnin' Wild" - UK Living Era AJA 5017 - MAKIN' WHOOPIE (1928)
"Film Star Parade" - UK Living Era AJA 5020 - PLEASE (1932)
"They Played the Palladium" - UK Decca RFLD 30 - NOW THAT YOU'RE GONE (1931)

THE JAZZING BING CROSBY - 33-120 622a/622b

This LP turned up around 1970 or 71 on both the 'Joker' and 'Historia' labels. It features a dozen Crosby tracks with a 'jazz' feel and freely draws material from RCA Victor, Columbia and Decca! The tracks are: I'm Coming Virginia, Dinah, Shine, Some of these days, My honey's lovin' arms, Someone stole Gabriel's horn, Stay on the right side of the road, Someday sweetheart, Moonburn, I'm an old Cowhand, Basin St Blues, You Must have Been a Beautiful Baby.

Well, this disc is now available again as part of a ten LP set entitled 'Jazz History - Volume 2' - cost £15.00.

Write to: Music Distributor, Wendenstr. 25.2000, Hamburg 1. Germany.

If you're interested, there is also a ten LP Volume 1 set as well.

****

BING ON VIDEO

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(Well, in the USA, anyway.)

At last there appear to be some 'legitimate' issues of Crosby movies and TV shows on video. Unfortunately, these are only available in the USA, but if you have one of those special video machines that play PAL (Australian system), NTSC (American System) or SECAM (French system) cassettes, then this list may be of interest to you. To save me answering letters, I do know that National market a VHS machine here capable of playing all three systems. Thanks to Girvan Paterson who supplied me with the list from American 'Video' magazine and also Graham Reade who added a few extra titles. All prices US$.

Films are shown in the four formats available in the USA:
VHS, Beta, LV (Laservision disc) and CED (RCA format video disc).

Bing Crosby Festival - 3 Mack Sennett Shorts - Blue of the Night, Billboard Girl and I Surrender Dear. Beta, VHS. $34.95. Hollywood.

The Bing Crosby Show - ABC TV show of May 14, 1962. With Bob Hope, Edie Adams, Gary Crosby, The Smothers Bros. Beta $39.95. VHS $42.95. Yesteryear. 57 min.

Comedy Capers II - Compilation of shorts, inc. Chaplin, Lloyd. Blue of the Night is the Crosby contribution. 60 min. Beta, VHS. Cinema.

Comedy Cavalcade - 120 minute compilation with Keaton, Langdon, Lahr, Shirley Temple, Danny Kaye, Bing, others. Beta, VHS. Videolibrary.

Comedy Special II - Compilation of outtakes featuring Bing, Bob Hope, The Ritz Bros, others. 60 min. Beta, VHS. Connection.

The Greatest Show on Earth - Bob & Bing in brief guest spot. 149 min. LV $39.95, Paramount, Beta, VHS $72.95. Paramount CED. $34.98 RCA.

Going My Way - 126 min. Beta, VHS $39.95. MCA.

Holiday Inn - 101 min. Beta, VHS $39.95. MCA.

Hollywood Goes to War - Compilation with dozens of stars inc. Bing. 41 min. Beta $39.95, VHS $42.95. Yesteryear.

The Hollywood Palace - Last show of series from Feb 7th, 1970. Many excerpts of past shows. Beta $39.95. VHS $42.95. Yesteryear.

Jack Benny 3 complete Benny shows from 1953 - 63. Many guest stars inc. Bing. 110 min. Beta, VHS. Shokus.

The Jack Benny Show - Final shows for 1951 and 53. Bing guests on one. 60 min. Beta, VHS. Vintage.

Legend of Sleepy Hollow - Walt Disney cartoon feature narr. by Bing. Beta, VHS. $49.95. Disney.

Outtakes III - Many comic goofs. 60 min. Beta, VHS $29.95. Shokus.

Outtakes V - More of the above. 60 min. Beta, VHS $29.95. Shokus.

Reaching for the moon - 1931 feature with Bing (guest) singing 'High Up Low Down'. Beta, VHS $49.95. Cable.

Revenge of the TV Bloopers 50 min. Beta, VHS. Dimensions.

That's Entertainment - 122 min. Beta, VHS $59.95. MCA-UACED $24.95.

That's Entertainment II - 133 min. Beta, VHS $69.95. MGM-UA.

27th Academy Awards - From 1955. 79 min. Beta $49.95, VHS $52.95. Yesteryear.

Young Bing Crosby - Edited versions of 3 Sennett Shorts. Crooner's Holiday, Blue of the Night, Sing Bing Sing. 39 min. Beta $39.95. VHS $42.95. Yesteryear.

Road to Bali - (Details unavailable)

Country Girl - (Details unavailable)

Bells of St Marys - (Details unavailable)

King of Jazz - (Details unavailable)

****

Although Bing has only guest roles in many of those tapes, there are several starring movies in that list. We are planning a video evening as our final function for 1983. If you have any Crosby TV shows or other specials you may care to lend us for the evening (VHS - PAL system only though), we'd appreciate your dropping us a line.

By the way, 'King of Jazz' was shown on cable television in the USA a couple of months ago. I believe that this is the complete print without the cuts and breaks of the print available for hire in this country.

PETER MURPHY'S 78 RECORD CENTRE

"THE BIGGEST LITTLE SHOP IN TOWN"

DEAR 78 COLLECTOR,
WE INVITE YOU TO LOOK FOR THAT ELUSIVE 78 AT THE '78 RECORD CENTRE'
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AL JOLSON
FRANKIE TRUMBAUER
BOB CROSBY
DUKE ELLINGTON
BENNY GOODMAN
FATS WALLER
GLENN MILLER
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* *

YOUR COMMITTEE AT WORK

* *

If you've ever wondered what the people who make up the committee of the Victorian Bing Crosby Society look like, your curiosity should now be satisfied (in part, anyway.) Here, five members work at collating an issue of this magazine. From left to right: George Styles, Sylvia Harding, Les Saynor, Josie Conway and Ken Orren. Where are the rest? In the other room, filling envelopes!

Bing Crosby

He's bound for Bing country

Bathurst Bing Crosby fan, Mr Graham Pascoe, is heading for the United States again.

Mr Pascoe, a Mitchell College lecturer, will fly to America soon to visit the birthplace of the famous crooner.

Crosby, world-famous singer and actor, was born at Tacoma, Washington, in 1903 and died in 1977.

Mr Pascoe is a member of the world-wide Bing Crosby Historical Society. He has conducted programs on Crosby on 2MCE-FM.

He said yesterday: "This trip has come out of the blue. My wife Helen is paying from money she has saved. She is giving me a present of the trip to be with other Crosby fans."

Mrs Pascoe and their two children accompanied her husband on the previous trip.

This time Mr Pascoe also plans to visit a university at Spokane, Washington, where Crosby was a student.

The Pascoes, of George St, have a pleasant collection of Crosby memoribilia, including numerous records and books on the life of the famous singer.

"Crosby was criticised following his death," said Mr Pascoe. "Now his son, Gary, is to release a book telling his side of the story. That will interest me.

Crosby was the man the word crooner was invented for. He was with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour in the "Road" series of films. He also starred with the late Grace Kelly.

Mr Pascoe is a realistic fan. He can even tell you when Bing got the sack early in his career!

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OTHER CROSBY SOCIETIES

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1. THE CROSBY COLLECTORS SOCIETY - the newest international society and one aimed at the collector. They issue a quarterly magazine about the same size as ours but professionally printed. The latest issue runs to 20 pages. Lots to interest the 'serious' Crosby fan. Cost: £3.00 p.a. Please make all cheques, postal orders, IMO's etc payable to JOHN BASSETT and send them to him c/- 'Bingville', 15 Oast Way, Rochford, Essex, SS4 1RZ, England.

Other societies of interest are:

BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PO Box 8013, Tacoma, Washington, USA 98408. President: Ken Twiss.

CLUB CROSBY, PO Box 8283, Sacramento, California 95818, USA. President: Al Sutton.

INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE, 7 Greenmeadow Close, Cwmbran NP44 4PJ, England. Editor: Reg Bristo.

KATHRYN CROSBY FAN CLUB, 1374 Broadway, Apt 7D, West Somerville, Ma. 02144, USA. President: Caroline Dawson.

THE SOUTHAMPTON BING CROSBY CLUB, 17 Edwina Close, Bitterne, Southampton, England. Editor: Jim Newell.

And finally, Frank Murphy's THE NEW BING CROSBY COLOUR PHOTOCLUB which you can read all about on pages 45 and 46.

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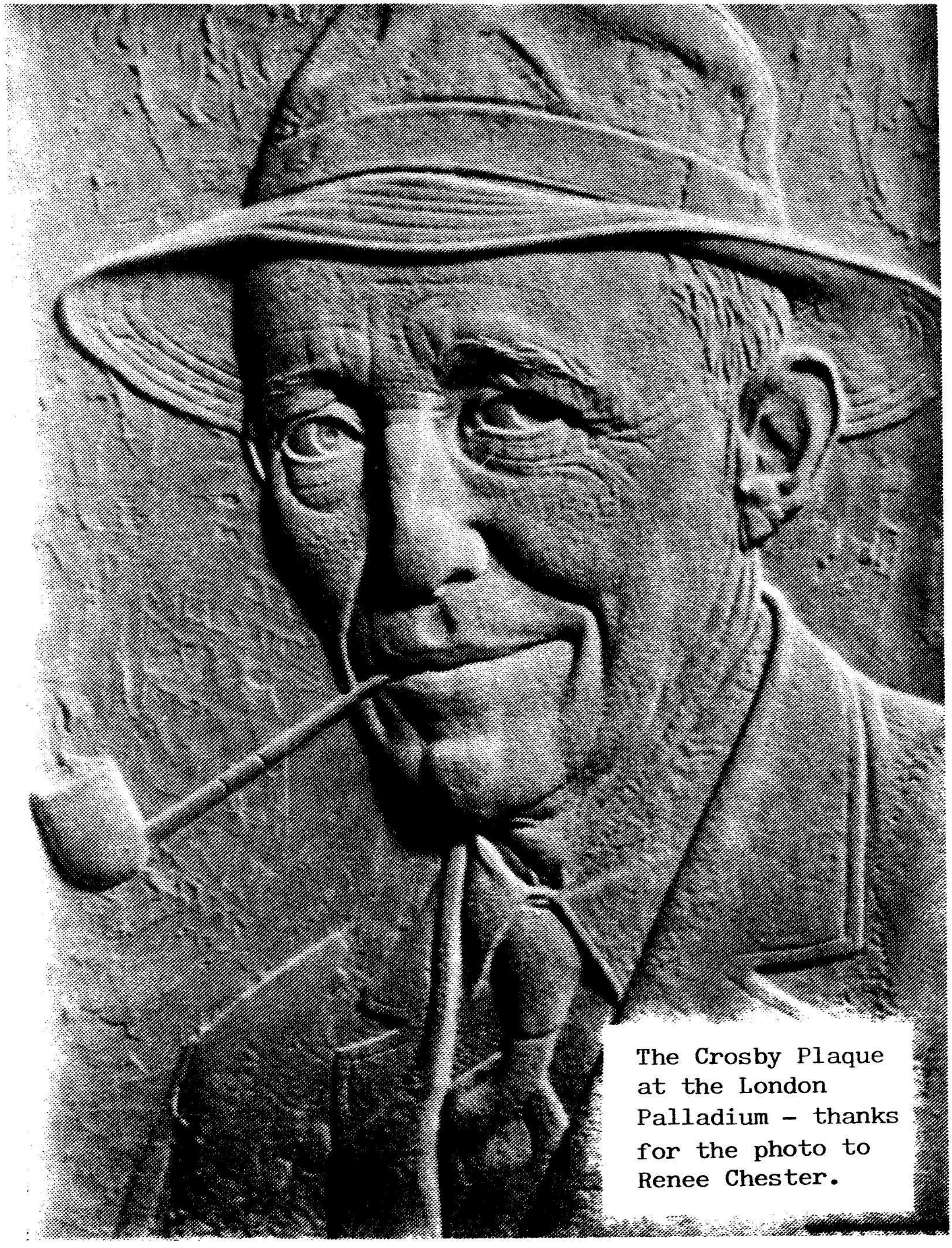
RECORDS AT A DISCOUNT

Two Melbourne Record shops offer discounts to members:

The Bentleigh Sewing and Record Centre, 80 Church St, Bentleigh and Cunningham's Record Centre. 80 Church St, Brighton.

Although Cunningham's changed hands recently, the new owners promise to continue offering discounts, but they do ask that you take along some proof of identity, preferably your membership card.

Overseas members interested in Australian issues may be interested to write and find whether mail orders can be filled. Very possibly.



The Crosby Plaque at the London Palladium - thanks for the photo to Renee Chester.

modern screen fashion

in hollywood

****
THE NEW BING CROSBY PHOTOCLUB
****

On the page opposite you'll see a picture of Bing and Jane Wyman from (I think) 'Here Comes the Groom'. If it looks good in black and white, imagine how it would look in colour.

Frank Murphy's New Bing Crosby Photo Club offers you the opportunity to aquire a collection of Crosby photographs, some dating back to the 1930's, in full colour. All photographs come conveniently backed with adhesive strips, and are printed approximately 5" x 7" - or the size of the photo shown. This picture, incidentally, is one supplied to new members on joining the photoclub.

Frank issues a quarterly bulletin with news of new photo releases and Bulletin number 1 lists the following photographs for sale.

1:- The Crosby Montage featuring a series of drawings of Bing in various poses.

2:- Pennies from Heaven - Bing and Madge Evans from the 1936 movie.

3:- Seasons - A photo from the last cover session.

4:- Young Bing Crosby - from the very early days.

5:- Bing and Joan Blondell - from East Side of Heaven.

6 - 9: - Four shots of the Crosby boys.

10:- Birth of the Blues.

Cost of each print is 40p and you have to order a minimum of three.

Cost of membership to the Photoclub is UK £3.00pa, Continent £4.00pa and overseas £8.00 pa. When you join, you receive three photographs plus two photographic badges.

Please make all payments to: Frank Murphy
32, Ferndale Avenue
Wallsend
Tyne and Wear NE28 7NE
England.

Although we normally don't give this much space to someone with something to sell, we do feel that Frank's efforts are deserving of support. Certainly they offer a unique service to the Crosby collector.

****
ANECDOTE COMPETITION - THE WINNER!
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Over the last two or three issues, you may recall that we have been running an informal competition for members in which the best anecdote concerning a member and their interest in Bing would win for that member a copy of the LP 'A Bing Crosby Collection 1928 - 32' on Australian CBS. I'm happy to announce that the winner is the person whose letter started off the idea for a competition in the first place: Ineke Hommes of Holland! When she reads this newsletter will be the first time that Ineke will know of her win. Congratulations Ineke!

If any members have any suggestions for other types of competitions we could run, we'd be happy to hear about them.

++

LETTERS

From Ken Twiss, Tacoma

I want to thank you for the great amount of space concerning BCHS. It is truly a worldwide organization and from the first hand information in London, it is well thought of in many parts of the world. This is very encouraging. As you know, it takes a lot of dedication to keep something going. It has already exceeded my greatest hopes, and now it must keep going and be well enough established to stand on its own.

Now the sad part. We must move the office by August 1st. I have canvassed the entire city and have had no offer of space, even for just two years. I hope by that time we will have the birthplace and then it can house most of the memorabilia we have.

(Postscript to Ken's comment. In the latest edition of the Historical Society newsletter, we learn that space has now been found for the Society for the required two years. The address and phone number of the BCHS remain unchanged.)

From Arnold Baker, Bangor

On May 7th, we attended John Marshall's gathering at London's Waldorf Hotel. What a great evening it was. I had never before Cont/...49

BING CROSBY says:

"I'll be a Glad Dad...

...when my four little shavers give me Personna Blades on Father's Day!"

"Most of the year, our four little tykes are gang-busters at heart. But on Father's Day, they soften up long enough to come across with a present for Pop. Being smart little shavers, they can recognize a first-class hint when they get one. So on June 17...

"Surprise me with Personna Blades, our fearsome foursome, and life with father will be more melodious than ever!" Personna's *close, smooth shaves* make every morning a beautiful one. Give *your* Dad Personna Blades, and he'll probably sing like Bing!

been to a Crosby 'do', so I didn't really know what to expect. John had set up a really nice 'Tapes Exclusive' stand for me on which I set up a couple of hundred tapes. Well from 5.30 until dinner was served at 8.00, I hardly had time to draw breath! Nancy stood nearby in amazement as the good folk queued up three and four deep for 2½ hours to 'get at me'. I had my hand almost shaken off and I must say that it gave me a really wonderful glow to receive so many thanks for the 'great and continuing enjoyment' I'd given people. The glow will last right through the winter and beyond!

It was a marvellous gathering, 216 in all, and just great to meet so many people who were just names previously. Among these I list Ken Twiss (what a really nice man), Reg Bristo, Alan Fisher - the list is almost endless.

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As most members will know, Arnold Baker runs a service called 'Tapes Exclusive' supplying Crosby on either cassette or reel to reel tape for very reasonable costs. A few months ago, we enclosed copies of Arnold's latest catalogue which listed, from memory, about 100 tapes. The latest catalogue now lists 136 and if would like a copy, why not drop a line to Arnold, enclosing a couple of international reply coupons to pay for Arnold's postage. These are available from any post office.

Arnold's address: 48 Groomsport Rd, Bangor, Co. Down. Northern Ireland BT20 5LR United Kingdom.

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From Richard Pearson, Arlington.

The 'King of Jazz' is being shown on the PRISM Cable System which is in the Philadelphia area. Perhaps it will be shown on other cable systems around the country. I do have a videotape copy and what a joy it is seeing Bing so young and in colour!

From Betty Harrison, Somerset

We recently visited America for 30 days and were able to see Bing's grave. The day we were there happened to be the day that the lady who looks after it was there putting fresh flowers down. We had a long talk with her and she has very fond memories of Bing when she worked with him at CBS. In her opinion, he was a wonderful man.

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BITS 'N' PIECES

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* The Victorian Bing Crosby Society recently signed up it's 400th member since we began operation in 1977. The honour of number 400 (and 401 too) goes to Harold and Mavis Carson of Yarraville, Victoria.

* Our next meeting on October 17th is also our AGM. Don't know how I could have forgotten this when I was typing the future functions page. Come along and we promise to get the speeches and elections over with as quickly as possible.

* A number of members have still not paid their membership fees and will receive a reminder with this newsletter. Please renew now or if you don't wish to, let us know NOW.

* If you enjoyed reading Vern Taylor's article on the Fabulous Ed Rice tapes, you may like to hear what all the fuss is about. No problem. The Keith G Hyde Bequest tapes in the Club's cassette library feature the bulk of the Rice tapes. Of course the LP's will have the sound cleaned up with the pops and clicks etc removed, but in the meantime, the tapes are just waiting for you on cassette.

* The Gary Crosby interview on page 9 of this issue actually comes from the Phil Donahue Show, April 14th, 1983. I had midplaced Richard's letter with this information when I typed the article.

* Last issue, the photograph of Bing at age 2 was erroneously attributed to Les Saynor. It was in fact supplied by Bob Schrader of South Australia. My error.

* On which Crosby record did Bob Hope first make an appearance? There is a school of thought that says Bing's recording of "Birds of a Feather" from December 20th 1940. Now although this song comes from the first 'Road' picture (Road to Singapore), Bing and Bob didn't record any songs together until 'Road to Morocco/Put it There Pal" in 1944. Certain keen-eared listeners tell me that they can hear Hopechip in with a couple of words : "I as Gate" about halfway through the record. Anyone brave enough to comment?

* We still have a few copies of "The Road to La Habra" - a comic book drawn by cartoonist Gregg Hammond. Cost is $5 plus $1 postage, and all proceeds go to the Bing Crosby Historical Society. Copies will be on sale at our October 17th meeting.

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FROM OUT OF THE PAST

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From 'Bing Crosby and The Bing Crosby Style' - by Dr J.T.H.Mize

A couple of years back, we published extracts from this remarkble 1946 book which not only gave a potted history of Bing's life and career to that point, but analyzed his style and records to a degree not seen before or since. Dr Mize who was 36 at that time, was a musicologist holding five University degrees on his subject, so we must really assume that he knew what he was talking about!

(On Frank Sinatra - very tongue in cheek)

When Sinatra was making his rapid rise to stardom, Bob Hope was in New York City and proceeding to make one of his frequent midnight jiving transcontinental calls to "Old Throw-it-away" Bing, disturbing the sleep of the "old man" with an announcement, "I'm bringing a kid to Hollywood who'll make you go to work!" Bing, with one eye open, but still manifesting his true attitude, laughed sleepily back into the receiver, "Fine - but hurry - I'm getting fat and lazy." In the 1945 RKO movie "Higher and Higher", Sinatra's first starring role, Bing agreed to appear in a very humourous sequence: riding bicycles, the two supposedly-envious singers pass each other, get off their bikes, stick out their tongues at each other, and ride on. In the superb movie short "Bond Rally", released for the Seventh War Bond Drive, Bing sings and then makes a speech, after which Frankie comes out and sings SATURDAY NIGHT while Bing is shown peeping from the wings, as if envious. (NOTE: No he didn't! Sounds like Dr Mize had a poor memory where this film was concerned. BM)

Both are ready-coiners. Sinatra speaks of Crosby as "The Fat Boy", "The Old Horse Trainer," and the "ball without the lace on top." Crosby calls Sinatra "The pencil with the fringe on top," and "The Voice that comes from 'out of nowhere.' " And in telling of observing Sinatra with a yo yo Bing says, "I was mildly surprised to see the yo yo standing still and Sinatra going up and down." Bing says, with subtle inference, that he is planning another travelogue, "The Road to Sumatra." Bing says that "it would take four of him to fill a barrel." Once when they appeared together Bing asked the electrician for "a lean spotlight" for emaciated-looking Frank; and when someone asked whether Frank was "his boy" Bing replied, "Naw, <u>mine</u> are all living." (All good clean fun, Bill. Bill? Is Bill Weeden still there? Actually, all kidding aside, that's a good example of the type of mid-40's publicity that helped <u>both</u> singers. BM)

(On the Bing Crosby 'style' of singing)

We must at least mention a couple of the exact vocal "devices" employed by Bing, even tho he is unconscious of them and it is simply a matter of his taste dictating to him, "doin' what comes naturally", and that is most musical. Sometimes Bing's releases just melt away into space; and sometimes he uses the "glide" effect, of a downward portamento which dissolves only after being transformed to a barely-audible lower note, usually on a harmonically-related pitch. Most usually he imparts warmth and intimacy and gentleness to a tone by scooping it, attacking it flat and sliding up to the eventual pitch, the rate of ascent or glissando depending on the length of the tone, on its scalic and harmonic position and importance, and on his innately good taste.

Crosby's present style is more of a distinct departure, rather than an evolution, from that soft crooning with its occasional bo-bu-buh-booing. As a member of Whiteman's Rhythm Boys he sang with a small "whispering" voice - a surface tone - but this has developed and matured into a full, very masculine-sounding rich, round baritone with something of a husky resonance. In his days with Arnheim, the metamorphosis of his voice and style was beginning; the many avid collectors of Crosbyana term this his "Arnheim" voice, when Bing's voice was taking on more fulness and increasing in quality.

During one period, as exampled by some of his Brunswick reissues, Bing almost went to the opposite extreme of crooning and seemed to be trying to outshout his accompanists, tending towards shrillness. An interested student can trace the gradual lowering and rounding out of Bing's voice, as well as the stylistic transition, thru the phonograph recordings made thru the years.

(Dr Mize later comments on Bing's ability as a whistler, as follows)

Another of Bing's abilities is his highly embellished "whistling style" with its musicianly trills and tremelos, a somewhat unusual field of musical art in which much current interest is being demonstrated. Among the representative samplings of Bing's lip-puckering is his Brunswick recording of JUST ONE MORE CHANCE. He whistles on all of his recordings of WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT: on Decca 3354 it is in a casual and leisurely style for only a period, eight measures; On Brunswick 80044 in one take he uses arpeggi; on another take he replaces the arpeggi with with short trills. On the second chorus of GOODNIGHT SWEETHEART (Brunswick 80046),

he whistles a relatively straight melody with a minimum of embellishments, against saxophone obbligato. A two measure passage of whistling in Stardust (Brunswick 80056) is particularly effective, coming as it does, just after a musical climax. In humorous duet with Connee Boswell, Bing gets in several snatches of whistling in BOB WHITE.

Milt Gabler comments: "Nobody in the world whistles like Bing for his licks are pure jazz. a throwback to his early days with Bix and Eddie Lang and the rest of the boys, days spent jamming and listening to jazzmen like Louis Armstrong, days that unconsciously carved Crosby's soul. And Bing has never forgotten them, you can hear it in his voice."

(In his book, Dr Mize also analyzes some thirty Crosby recordings. A couple of examples follow.)

SHINE

Among the several small vocal ensembles with which Bing Crosby has appeared is the Mills Brothers, who have achieved unusual success as a male quartet, especially in their ability to simulate instruments vocally. In 1932, Bing recorded several sides with this superior foursome, including the easy-listenin' MY HONEY'S LOVIN' ARMS.
As one of the demonstrators here, we have chosen SHINE, a Mack-Brown-Dabney song which was made famous by jazz singer Louis Armstrong; and the Crosby version of it demonstrates well his scat singing ability and his pretty choices of intervals in obbligato:
Four measures of muted blues trombone precede a measure of scat singing by Bing...And then for the first chorus, the Mills Brothers take over with the bass voice of Mr Mills Sr., booming out, a simulated tuba sound as the three others harmonize on the words; it should be noted, critically, that certain passages here are not in the best harmony, notably the chord choices for the I take these troubles all with a smile phrase...For an extended interlude, the quartet simulates instruments (three muted trumpets and a tuba) in a simple plaintive melody. The tempo is slowed down and the orchestra enters to accompany Bing's statement of the words, with deviations from the straight melody. Over an organ point by muted trombone, Bing, somewhat like Louis Armstrong, sings a beautiful passage on "Oh, chocolate drop, that's me..." Then while one of the Mills solos on the straight melody with a resonant voice and Southern dialect, Bing adds some delightful melodic commentaries with clever wordage and pretty intervals, such as the luscious "Ah, keep on smiling through..." Bing takes a solo break and then proceeds to 'scat like made' while the Mills accompany him

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY/POINCIANA

Here we quote a review from Billboard magazine (Feb.26th, 1944) by Mr M.H.Orodenker, which demonstrates the detailed attention which is being given to American music by several magazines.

"The incomparable Bing is his incomparable self again. The way he sings out for both of these sides, the song material will undoubtedly skyrocket into popularity. A large measure of attention has already been showered on 'Poinciana', and the manner in which Crosby gives voice to this gorgeous song of the tree, it's a certainty that everybody will want to start singing it. That a Crosby chant is the most potent portion of the song is best demonstrated by his doings for this disc.
Packing all the exotic appeal of a Spanish lullaby, and its melodic charm enhanced by the lyrical appeals, Crosby gets going with the verse, marked by the bolero rhythms of John Scott Trotter's band. Into the chorus to carry out the side, there is an infectious beat. Per usual, Trotter's scoring of figures for the fiddles brightens the background bank. Making for a complete turn in tune and tempo, yet just as effortlessin his singing performance, is the turn-over.
Already a heavy favourite on the West Coast, Gordon Jenkin's "San Fernando Valley" threatens to spread like a prairie wildfire across the lands. Particularly with such a side as Crosby turns in to set the sparks flying. Packing all the inherant qualities of a Western ditty in melodic and lyrical content, Crosby eschews any of its corn and it comes out as a bright and breezy rhythm ditty. In his characteristic manner, he makes it thoroughly contagious. It's a 64-bar melody, and with plenty of rhythmic urges from the Trotter tootlers creates much enthusiasm for two choruses.

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And that's where we'd better leave it for this edition of "The Crosby Voice". One item I forgot to mention earlier is that we have decided to discontinue the single sheet 'interim' newsletters. Quite simply they take time and effort to produce and we have seen that even when they are not used, members still remember to turn up for meetings.
I look forward to seeing you at the A.G.M. on October 17th.

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BACK PAGE SPECIAL

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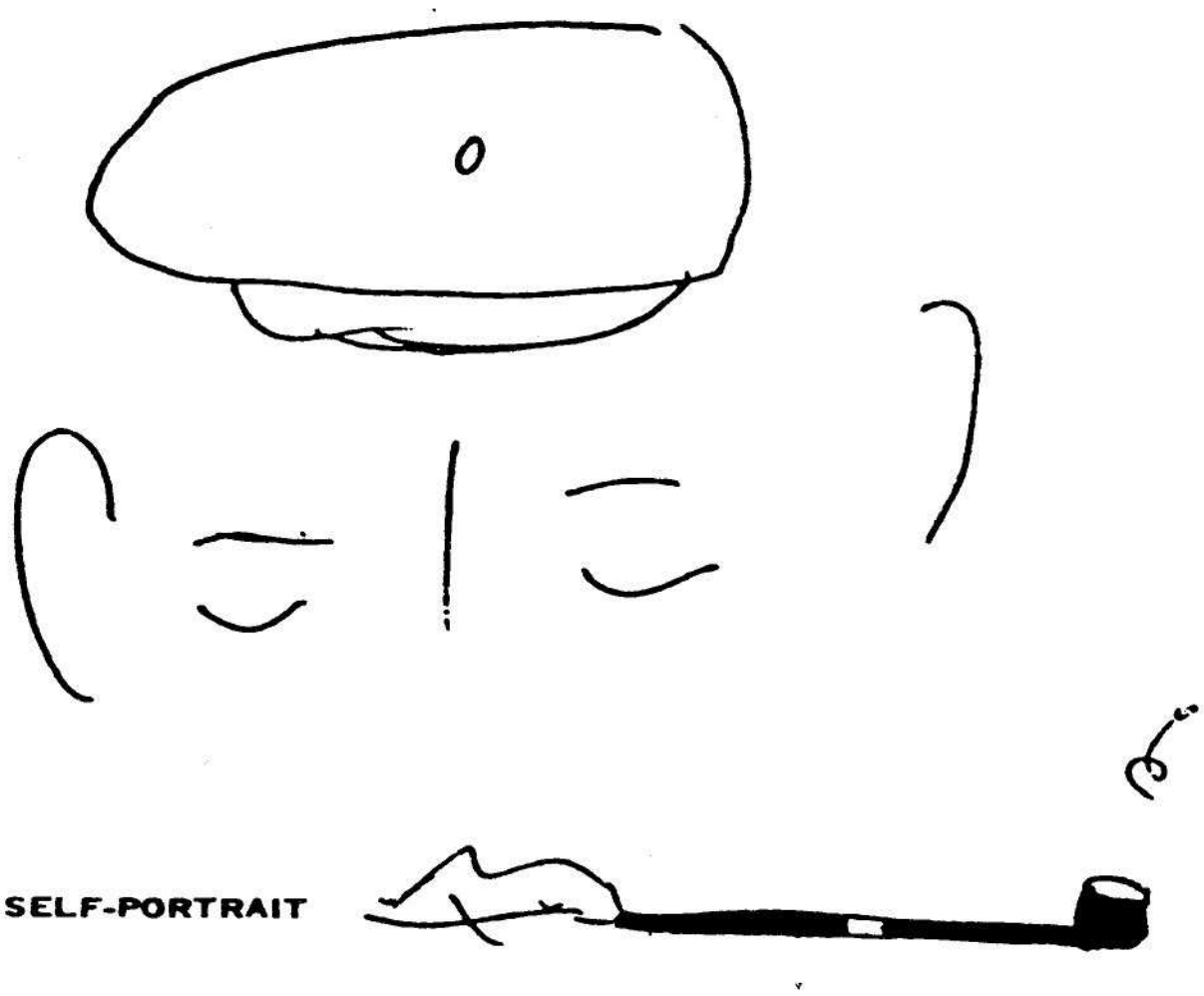
(Taken from 'Life' magazine, mid-1940's)

BING CROSBY

by BING CROSBY



A SELF-PORTRAIT

Line of work: Actor.

But what would you really rather do? The same thing. Should it fail to go as well, I would like to write.

Mainspring: Because I became a singer it would be my mother. When I was growing up she insisted on me singing whenever possible —even though at that time I saw nothing in it.

Most paradoxical quality: Don't think I have any.

Chinks in the armor: I have no armor. It seems to me I am very simple, uncomplicated and quite transparent.

Boiling point: Golf, when it's going badly. Noisy picture theatres.

Personal panacea: Back to golf, hopefully.

Persisting superstitions: Ladders, hat on the bed, Friday the thirteenth, though I don't think any of them have any genuine influence.

The terrible temptation: The groaning board.

Unfounded fears: Can't think of any.